

FRANKLIN  
AND OTHER PLAYS

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RITA BENTON



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By RITA BENTON ✓  
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*To*

DR. E. H. LEWIS

*whose gentle criticism prevented this book  
from being worse.*

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## INTRODUCTION

CAMERA men, sob sisters, special writers who can extract human interest from a stone crusher! eminent criminologists, alienists, psychiatrists, sociologists; artists, cartoonists, moving-picture magnates . . . what an opportunity they missed! The least interesting of sordid crimes today is more completely recorded than the Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson, but the one Life and Death which, more than any other since the invention of writing, has influenced humanity, was so badly reported that countless millions of words of exegesis have been printed to fill in the gaps!

What did these grave, bearded men, their foreheads bound with broad phylacteries, Scribes and Pharisees; what did these lawyers and religious leaders really think of the gentle Nazarene who, for a time at least, overthrew their order? They have left no record.

What of the inarticulate anguish of the faithful few, soon to be changed to triumphant exultation? What were the innermost feelings of the blind man who might have been cured? Of Mary, of Martha, of the High Priest and the Governor of Jerusalem?

Jesus does not appear in the play *Coming Down the Mount*, save in the reaction produced through these widely differing personages. To me, a student of theology in youth and early manhood . . . a student still, if I may be permitted to say so . . . Rita Benton has re-created these characters of the great world tragedy, has invested them with life and emotion, in contrast with which the average sermon is no more vital than the image of some prehistoric animal worked up by a paleontologist from a handful of bones.

I believe this play to be devout in tone and religious in purpose.

But I suspect that, humanity having changed very little in 1900 years either in emotional qualities or mental processes, there are many men and women today who may find themselves limned under ancient names, and will insist that the author's portraits are caricatures. After all, when one holds the mirror up to nature, it cannot be expected that everyone will be pleased. Indeed, having been privileged to read the manuscript, I ventured to suggest to the author that if perchance there yet survived any of the types of the Scribes and Pharisees, they might be deeply offended and perhaps resentful.

But the author had the courage of her convictions, in additional proof of which this volume contains a play dealing with Puritanism.

It may be that I am prejudiced against Puritanism, because to me, books and music, pictures and plays, and even games, are more necessary than meat; and I confess to more reverence for Bacchus and Ceres than for Cotton Mather and Billy Sunday. Those who believe that the only way to please God is to deny ourselves whatever He has permitted us to create that is beautiful will hate the idea of playing harp with me in a future existence as keenly as I dislike meeting them now; but I know them well enough to feel sure that they will be horrified to find it hinted in *Margaret of Salem* that all New England was not acting under plenary inspiration of the Almighty when the Puritans found their favorite amusements in hunting witches and persecuting Quakers.

Some of them have forgiven Hawthorne for writing about the Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale, but will they forgive the suggestion that envy, hatred and malice may have motivated the councils of the elect, and that inability under stress of great excitement to remember a simple formula may easily be taken as proof that innocence is guilt?

What I really fear for the author is that the theatrical managers, none of whom is a Puritan, to my knowledge, will not forgive her for failing to provide a happy ending for this play, as George Bernard Shaw did for "The Devil's Disciple." True, Shaw made the Puritanism of Mrs. Dudgeon most unlovely, but (albeit with his tongue in his cheek) he makes his parson the real hero, which not only takes the sting out of the satire, but meets the box office point of view by leaving Dick unhung. I couple these plays deliberately. When Mansfield produced "The Devil's Disciple" I wrote for a Chicago magazine what was, I believe, the first 100 per cent appreciation it received in this country. And I am glad to record in advance of any performance my very genuine admiration for Margaret of Salem, the best play dealing with Puritanism, in my opinion since then.

As to Franklin, the reader has the respectful assurance of one of that great American's most ardent admirers that the philosopher talks in character, most of the time. The wit, the humor, the sound sense of this erstwhile Printer's Devil who "snatched the thunderbolt from heaven, the sceptre from tyrants," betrays a profound knowledge on the author's part of the Autobiography, Letters, and indeed, every scrap of writing that could in any way illuminate the character of her favourite hero. It is Franklin himself who speaks to you in this play, amid surroundings more faithfully reproduced than is ordinarily possible in an historical drama. Nor is the portraiture of Caron de Beaumarchais and of the British statesmen less exact.

Of more than three dozen plays written by Rita Benton the three in this volume are the only ones not tested in actual performance. Most of the earlier plays have been published, and in chronological order of writing they grouped as Bible Plays, Shorter Bible Plays, and The Star-Child and Other Plays. In the order of book publication the se-

quence was reversed. All were written for and have been played by children in Chicago and elsewhere. All are being played now.

The *Star-Child and Other Plays*, published in 1921, the author's first book, won instant and unanimous commendation of the critics. A kindly but anonymous reviewer who devoted a column to these juvenile dramas in the *New York Evening Post*, intimated that the author might well spare time enough to write some plays for grown folk. I do not say that the creation of *Franklin and Other Plays* was thus inspired; but I think he will agree, when this volume reaches him through the customary channels, that his challenge has been met . . . abundantly.

L. J. DE BEKKER

*New York, January, 1924.*



# FRANKLIN





## THE CHARACTERS

- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.....Agent of the colonies in London, then Paris.
- SALLY FRANKLIN.....Distant niece of Franklin.
- MRS. HOWE.....of London.
- LORD HOWE.....Her brother.
- LORD DESMOND.....
- LORD GUILDFORD.....
- LORD STOREMONT.....
- LORD SANDWICH.....
- LORD NORTH.....
- } Members of the Privy Council.
- EARL OF GOWER.....President of Privy Council.
- WILL WHATELY.....of London.
- THOMAS HUTCHINSON.....Governor of Massachusetts.
- WEDDERBURN. ....Counsel for the crown.
- ARTHUR LEE.....Agent to succeed Franklin in London.
- CARON DE BEAUMARCHAIS..French Playwright.
- JOHN ADAMS.....of the Continental Congress.
- ARTHUR RUTLEDGE.....of the Continental Congress.
- MADAME HELVETIUS.....of Paris.
- MADAME DE CHAUMONT....of Paris.
- M. DE CHAUMONT.....of Paris.
- ABBÉ MORELLET.....of Paris.
- COUNT VERGENNES.....French minister of war.
- Members of Privy Council, servants, secretary, pastry-cook.

1774—1776—1778

- ACT I. MRS. HOWE'S GARDEN—LONDON. 1774.
- ACT II. MEETING OF PRIVY COUNCIL IN COCK-  
PIT. 1774.
- ACT III. ROOM IN FRANKLIN'S LODGING ON  
STATEN ISLAND. 1776.
- ACT IV. HOME OF FRANKLIN AT PASSY, FRANCE.  
1778.
- ACT V. SMALL ROOM IN PALACE OF TUILERIES.  
1778.

If desired, the same panelled setting may be used for the last four acts with changes for Gothic window embrasure (ACT II), to Dutch Portraits (ACT III), to scenes from Watteau (ACT IV), to Stained Glass bearing arms of France (ACT V).

## FOREWORD

The year 1774 was one of strain between England and her American colonies. The misrepresentative English Government of the period valued the colonies only as a taxable property, the mass of the English people having about as little voice in colonial matters then as now. The American slogan was: "No taxation without representation." Their spirit expressed itself in the motto on their rattlesnake flag: "Don't tread on me."

In spite of many right-minded men (according to American ideas), such as Burke, Chatham, Fox, Hyde, Howe, the cabal in the British Ministry, formed of lords who looked for nothing but dividends from their over-sea possessions, was slowly cutting the cable which linked America to England.

Said Franklin: "I am a little of the sailor's mind when dragging a long cable out of the shop into the ship. 'Heaven help us,' cried the one, 'tis a long cable! Would we could see the end of 't!' 'Damme,' cried the other, 'if I believe it has an end at all. Someone has cut it off!' *British red tape makes coils without an end.*"

The tax on tea, epitome of the colonies' grievances, stirred them to protest. Petition followed petition, unwillingly received by the King and answered vindictively by the close of Boston Port, the quartering of troops and the like. Loyalty to England struggled with resentment, when suddenly a scapegoat was found in the person of Thomas Hutchinson, royal Governor of Massachusetts, but a native born American who had advised the discipline of America as of a refractory child.

Eagerly they petitioned his dismissal. Their petition fell on the ears of an England infuriated by the Boston Tea Party.

Tea may be the beverage which soothes but not inebriates, but the Boston Tea Party was as intoxicating as modern prohibition, and soon set the two countries to fisticuffs.

# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

## ACT I

MRS. HOWE'S garden, adjoining her house in London, a favorite rendezvous of FRANKLIN, is surrounded by solid six-foot box hedges (made, not painted), trimmed squarely. At the back, toward the left, is a wide opening, at each side of which the box trees rise higher, trimmed pyramidically, or fantastically cut as peacocks. From the opening, broad shallow steps lead out of garden, curving left toward the house, which is not visible. The steps are bordered by a continuation of the hedges. Beyond the hedge is a gray-blue English sky. At extreme left front is a smaller opening into the East Garden, framed in box peacocks.

Within the garden, criss-cross from the entrance is a tall evergreen (made solid). Beneath its shade are several easy chairs, one at the right, and two at the left, facing one another, with a chess table between. MRS. HOWE, a dominant lady of sixty or thereabouts, who reveres nor God nor man, save FRANKLIN, is seated at the table, working out a chess puzzle. Her brother, LORD HOWE, the finest and gentlest of men, is pacing restlessly to and fro, possessed with the uneasiness of a peace-loving man.

The scene opens with brilliant sunshine, changing to deep gold. The shadows gradually obscure the blue of the sky as the scene advances. The servants bring torches and set them up about the garden just before the last guests arrive. The date is 1774.



HOWE. When does your great chess-player come?

MRS. HOWE. Eh? Franklin?

HOWE. Aye, aye, your postmaster—scientist—diplomat—what not? An able man, and a dangerous!

MRS. HOWE. Ah, bah! Where's your sense of humour? He jests at us, and ye construe his jests in sober earnest.

HOWE. How else can we construe 'em? See you, Carrie, he clothes his earnestness with jests.

MRS. HOWE (*stares up at him*). Howe, I wronged ye! Ye've got a deep mind.

HOWE. I tell you, he menaces England's peace.

MRS. HOWE. Piff! He's our Light in the Heavens—pointing the way to peace—had our wise men but wit to discern it

HOWE. Peace with *conditions*.

MRS. HOWE (*quickly*). Ah, be honest, Howe, what of those conditions? Are they unfair?

HOWE. Um—m, no!

MRS. HOWE. Unreasonable?

HOWE. Um—m, no!

MRS. HOWE. Contrary to the spirit of old England?

HOWE. Um—m, no!

MRS. HOWE (*impatiently*). Then what in the devil's name's the matter?



HOWE. England won't grant 'em.

MRS. HOWE. Poor peace-maker—Dr. Franklin! Our wise men are fools.

HOWE. We must tide over the present discontent in America. You sound him, Carrie; discover what will weigh with him.

MRS. HOWE. See if he's bribable? Get thee behind me!

HOWE. He must help us. (*He walks a few paces, then returns.*) I've asked a few Privy Councilors to meet him.

MRS. HOWE. Privy Councilors! Pfui! Why Privy Councilors? Men who sell to the highest bidder?

HOWE (*shrugs*). They decide America's fate. (*He looks at watch.*) They'll be here soon.

MRS. HOWE. Cool, i' faith! I want Franklin to myself for a game of chess before the world comes calling.

HOWE. My dear—lock your doors.

MRS. HOWE. Why this privacy, my good sir?

HOWE. Public proceedings must be kept private.

MRS. HOWE. Howe, you're Irish.

HOWE. I mean, the public can't be trusted to manage——

MRS. HOWE. Their own affairs? La-la!

HOWE (*shrugs*). The end justifies——

MRS. HOWE. The end! Poor deluded man, are

ye talking of an end? My word, Lord Howe, there'll be no end, till ye give the colonials justice. D'ye hear?

HOWE (*imperturbably*). I hear.

MRS. HOWE. And as for locking the world away from Franklin! Impossible! That brazen French hussy is coming.

HOWE (*eagerly*). Madame Helvetius? Is she in London.

MRS. HOWE. Whom you admire so hugely——

STOREMONT *and* WHATELY *descend steps leading to garden.* HOWE *moves to meet them.*

MRS. HOWE (*calling after*). And who has no eye for anyone but Franklin.

STOREMONT. Madam, may I present Mr. Will Whately?

MRS. HOWE. Will Whately? I knew your brother, sir. Before he died, he and Thomas Hutchinson, of Massachusetts, used to come here often.

WHATELY. Gad, they were great friends, Ma'am! Together they pushed through this American policy which is raising such a devil of a row.

HOWE (*with interest*). What's that? What's that?

WHATELY. I don't know details. My brother served as go-between. Hutchinson, in his letters, urged severity as the one measure likely to bring the Massachusetts rebels to their senses. My brother carried these letters into Parliament,——and Parliament followed Hutchinson's advice.

HOWE. Which was——?

WHATELY. The closing of Boston Port, the quartering of troops, and the like.

HOWE. Hum! So Hutchinson, an American, has dictated England's policy. Does America know it?

WHATELY. How should she?

STOREMONT *fingers the chess men uneasily, then moves away, regarding the box peacocks.*

HOWE. If it were known, it would not add to Hutchinson's popularity in the rebel town of Boston.

WHATELY. O, good Lord! They'd tar and feather him.

HOWE (*severely*). I would advise you then, sir, be discreet!

*The SERVANT ushers in two men. STOREMONT and WHATELY draw aside to the left.*

SERVANT. Lord Guildford, Ma'am! Lord Desmond! (*Exit.*)

MRS. HOWE. How d'ye do? You're not at all welcome, sirs. I wanted Franklin to myself for a bit.

DESMOND (*chuckles*). Ah, you ladies! Why is it Franklin's such a centre of attraction?

MRS. HOWE (*sharply*). Because he draws the best out of folk—instead of trying to shine himself.

GUILDFORD. A hit, Desmond! A hit!

DESMOND (*bowing*). It is easy to strike sparks from Mrs. Howe,

HOWE (*looks at MRS. HOWE questioningly, but she settles herself in chair to listen*). Gentlemen, affairs are criss-cross in America. The question is, is Franklin the man to handle the affair?

DESMOND. How much does he ask?

GUILDFORD (*throwing himself lazily into chair on other side of tree*). What the deuce are the colonies complaining of anyway?

HOWE. They complain we have one code for England and another for America.

GUILDFORD (*sitting up straight*). Good Lord! Why shouldn't we?

MRS. HOWE. Why should we?

DESMOND. Er—er—they're colonials——

HOWE. The root of the trouble! Why in America, any more than in England, should there be taxation without representation?

DESMOND. But that's what colonies are for.

GUILDFORD (*reclining again*). It's a great bore, certainly!

DESMOND. Well, what's to be done?

MRS. HOWE. O la, gentlemen, I can tell ye: Give Dr. Franklin anything he asks for. It'll save ye the trouble of thinking.

GUILDFORD. Gad, there's Sandwich!

LORD SANDWICH *hastens in with* CARON DE BEAUMARCHAIS. HOWE *and* DESMOND *draw back*.

SANDWICH. Lord, Ma'am, I've hastened! Present M. Beaumarchais of Paris, Y'know, the fellow



who wrote—what the devil's the name of your piece? I slept through your reading of it one night.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*bowing*). The Barber of Seville.

DESMOND. Gad, Sandwich, I saw ye clap it.

SANDWICH. Have I manners or have I not? (*He turns to MRS. HOWE.*) He wants to meet Franklin, so I brought him along. It's all right, ain't it?

MRS. HOWE. You need never ask pardon for your manners, dear Lord Sandwich.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Your pardon if I intrude. I would meet your greatest Englishman, the man who has shed such floods of light upon Europe—the sage whom two worlds claim.

DESMOND (*stares at him*). Good Lord!

SANDWICH (*waving paper he carries*). Here sirs, here's news for ye! I got it at Will's coffee house, just printed. (*Throws himself into chair opposite MRS. HOWE.*)

MRS. HOWE. What is it?

DESMOND (*taking and reading*). What a damn bold proposition!

MRS. HOWE. Let me see't, m'lord.

GUILDFORD (*getting up and looking over DESMOND'S shoulder*). Insolent! (*Passes it to HOWE.*)

SANDWICH. What d'ye make of it?

MRS. HOWE. Howe, give me that paper. (*HOWE meekly hands it to her. She glances at it, then looks up.*) Frederick of Prussia claims the right to England?

HOWE. A jest!

SANDWICH. No, no! Read!

*All cluster about MRS. HOWE, save BEAUMAR-CHAIS, who stands at a slight distance regarding the scene with amusement.*

MRS. HOWE (*reads*). "Frederick, by the grace of God——"

SANDWICH. Or the devil!

MRS. HOWE. "King of Prussia, to our English subjects!!!!"

SANDWICH. Go on! Go on!

MRS. HOWE. "Whereas it is well known to history that England was first settled by the Germans, under the leadership of Hengist, Horsa and others, and that these colonies have flourished, yet have yielded us small profit——"

DESMOND. I like his impudence.

MRS. HOWE. "We hereby order that all goods exported from the isle of Britain shall pay a tax of four per cent to us and our successors."

ALL. Eh?

MRS. HOWE. Howe, lend me your glasses, man; sure, my eyesight's failing. (*She reads again.*) Sure, it can't mean what it says.

SANDWICH. Did ye ever hear the like?

MRS. HOWE. "That all vessels sailing from England shall stop at our own port of Koeningsberg, to be unladen, searched and charged with duties." (*She looks up, heaving a sigh of relief.*) A monstrous joke of Frederick!

DESMOND. Would he dare?



SANDWICH. But listen—there's more yet! (*He takes paper from Mrs. Howe and reads.*) “Furthermore, we command that all thieves, murderers and villains be emptied from our gaols into said isle of Britain for their better peopling——”

GUILDFORD. Lord, is he addled?

STOREMONT. I dare say we shall hear by the next boat that he's upon his way with all his armies to back this proposition.

DESMOND. Fancy! Pay a tax to Prussia! Allow the scum of foreign gaols to land here! What country would submit to such demands!

FRANKLIN *with his niece enter on last line.*

FRANKLIN (*on step*). No country on God's earth, gentlemen! Nor will America!

*Exclamations of “Franklin! Franklin at last!” greet him as he brings forward his young niece, SALLY FRANKLIN.*

FRANKLIN. Madam, may I entreat your favor for my little niece from Boston, come over to lose her wild Indian ways, and to learn to love the mother country?

SALLY FRANKLIN (*pretty, shy, ill-at-ease, flushes*). No—sir!

MRS. HOWE (*kindly*). My dear, pay no heed to his jokes. We know all good Americans love the mother country.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*flushing still more*). No—ma'am!

MRS. HOWE (*amused*). Ah, we'll try to teach you. (*She draws her aside to table.*)

SANDWICH. Dr. Franklin, may I present to you M. Beaumarchais of Paris?

BEAUMARCHAIS (*advances bowing*). I am most honoured. We in France have watched Dr. Franklin and his heroic efforts to—how do you say it—chain?—bind?—fetter?—America to England. (*He looks over toward SALLY FRANKLIN who listens absorbed.*) Eh, Mademoiselle?

FRANKLIN. Sir, her union with England is America's pride.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*gaily*). See these gentlemen look daggers at me!

HOWE (*gravely*). The troubles of a mother country and her child can scarcely interest a foreign nation.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Pardon. They interest exceedingly.

HOWE. They do not justify interference, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*lightly*). When a child is ill-treated—the neighbors rush in. Bah, I am no diplomat!

WHATELY. 'Tis evident.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Diplomacy—to pretend to be ignorant of what everyone else knows, or to know what everyone else does not know—to seem deep when one is only empty and hollow—to set spies and pension traitors—there's diplomacy or I'm a dead man! Frankness is *my* métier, so—should the hour come——

FRANKLIN (*smiling*). When English liberty needs defence 'gainst England?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Exactly! France lies across the water.

HOWE. Is France so free?

SANDWICH. I have heard tales of a certain—er—poet—clapped into prison for exercising that frankness which is his *métier*.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Truly, my lord. France is as free as England. Provided I do not speak of the government, nor of religion, nor of political matters, nor of questions of morality, nor of people in place, nor of any powerful corporation, nor of the opera, nor of anybody who was anything, I can print all I like, freely, under the inspection of two or three censors.

*(All laugh.)*

FRANKLIN. Monsieur, your words are kind, but we, England and America, make up the mightiest empire on earth. Divided—who can wish for a division? If in my few remaining years of life I can cement our union still more strongly, gladly I give myself—

DESMOND. Bravo, sir!

HOWE. If all Americans but resembled Dr. Franklin!

FRANKLIN. Sir, you mistake. The difficulty is that all Englishmen do not imitate Lord Howe.

HOWE (*indicating paper*). Have you seen this, Dr. Franklin? Is it a jest?

FRANKLIN (*glancing at it*). A jest in earnest. (*HOWE and MRS. HOWE exchange glances.*) But—read to the end, my lord.

HOWE (*reads*). "We flatter ourselves that these commands will be thought reasonable by our colonists in England, since they are copied from their *own* laws, made by their parliament for the governing of their *own* colonies—in America."

GUILDFORD. Impossible!

FRANKLIN. But true!

DESMOND. No wonder America don't like the scum of our gaols to be dumped there!

SANDWICH (*sneeringly*). Rot! That's not what they kick at. It's what touches their pocket-books, eh, Guildford?

FRANKLIN (*quietly*). Yet we empty 'em on principle. I have but little I can call my own, but nineteen shillings in the pound I'll spend to defend my right to give or to refuse the other shilling.

HOWE. Do all feel so strongly?

FRANKLIN. I am considered moderate at home, even luke-warm and slow.

MRS. HOWE. A libel! No one can be called slow who's bottled lightning. Be a kind of lightning rod, dear Doctor; draw off the storm that's brewing.

FRANKLIN (*ruefully*). On my head? I fear I shall.

SERVANT *enters*.

SERVANT. One from America to speak with Dr. Franklin.

FRANKLIN (*to* MRS. HOWE). You will hold me excused, Madam?

MRS. HOWE. But return!



FRANKLIN *goes with* SERVANT.

HOWE (*who has been studying edict*). This is evidently a joke of Frederick of Prussia.

STOREMONT. These Germans are insolent enough for anything.

SANDWICH. Evidently Franklin had already seen it.

MRS. HOWE. You surprise me, sirs! For five intelligent and grown-up men! Why, gentlemen——

SANDWICH. The devil!

HOWE. Do you mean——?

DESMOND. I'll be hanged if 'tis not the stupid joke of some American.

HOWE (*smiling uncertainly*). 'Tis a fair hit.

MRS. HOWE *laughs*. *The men all stare at her in amazement, then* DESMOND *slaps his knee*.

DESMOND. Pox me, Franklin!

SANDWICH. Franklin? The old hypocrite! The sly fox!

MRS. HOWE. How he must have enjoyed your excitement, dear Lord Sandwich!

SANDWICH. Madam, I will *not* be laughed at by an American. England must not be laughed at. To think of the postmaster-general of America circulating such trash!

MRS. HOWE. 'Twas you circulated it, my lord.

SANDWICH. Bah! Good day, Ma'am. (*He goes to steps but turns to call back.*) Tell him from me,

Howe, I'll get him thrown out. He shall not handle our letters. I put no trust in him.

HOWE (*following SANDWICH and speaking urgently*). My lord, think again. 'Tis only since Franklin has been postmaster-general, that England has received revenue from that service.

SANDWICH. Bah! Go to the devil! (*He hastens out.*)

HOWE *joins* BEAUMARCHAIS, *as* FRANKLIN *re-enters with* ARTHUR LEE.

FRANKLIN. Madam, may I present Arthur Lee just arrived from America?

MRS. HOWE. Not the Arthur Lee I've heard of?

LEE. There scarcely could be two, Ma'am. I am the only—er—well-known one of that name.

MRS. HOWE. Indeed, sir, your reputation don't belie you.

HOWE (*joins group*). How runs the feeling in America, Mr. Lee?

LEE. High, my lord, high and bitter.

HOWE. Against England?

LEE. No, sir, not against England!

HOWE (*surprised*). Eh?

LEE. Against England's governor—Hutchinson of Massachusetts.

EXCLAMATIONS. Hutchinson! What's he done? Poor devil!

LEE (*excitedly*). What has he not done? From his own letters sir, he is convicted. He has falsely



and secretly misrepresented the feeling in America. He is a scoundrel, sirs, a blackguard, sirs!

HOWE (*thoughtfully*). The governor stands for England.

FRANKLIN. Your pardon! the governor runs for England.

LEE. From the mobs of Boston!

STOREMONT. Gad, I'm glad of it.

DESMOND. The devil take 'em!

GUILDFORD. How's that?

HOWE. Fled to England!

LEE. He's in London now.

} *All speak  
together.*

WHATELY (*deliberately*). The rascals!

LEE (*to WHATELY*). You show concern. You are perhaps, a friend of Hutchinson?

WHATELY. My brother was his friend, sir. Boston shall pay for this outrage.

FRANKLIN. Your pardon! Hutchinson shall pay. England must recall Governor Hutchinson.

WHATELY. At the demand of Massachusetts?

DESMOND. They dare not ask it.

LEE. They do ask it.

HOWE. Dr. Franklin, tell us plainly.

FRANKLIN. As agent of the colony of Massachusetts, I am directed to petition his majesty for the recall of Governor Hutchinson.

MRS. HOWE. Then England has but to repudiate Hutchinson——

FRANKLIN. And all his deeds!

MRS. HOWE. And the situation's saved.

FRANKLIN. Already our people are calming, now that the truth is out, and they know Hutchinson was to blame for England's harshness.

WHATELY. But—England recede?

HOWE. England will never repudiate her governor.

MRS. HOWE. But if her governor's wrong? I know Thomas Hutchinson, and he's a pig-headed fool, honest but pig-headed.

HOWE. Still—England will back him. She dare not recall him.

LEE. What?

WHATELY. If England recall him at the demand of a pack of rebels, her honor is lost.

LEE. If she do not, her colony is lost.

HOWE. She will not take dictation from a colony; that were to admit that she has failed.

WHATELY. She has not failed.

LEE. Her rule of us has been one constant failure.

FRANKLIN (*smiling*). Gentlemen, can you not persuade yourselves that neither of you is infallible?

LEE (*sneeringly*). Who is infallible? Is Dr. Franklin?

FRANKLIN. As to mine own infallibility, I am too modest to claim it in general; but when we come down to particulars, I, like others, give it up with difficulty. I may have been wrong yesterday, may be so again tomorrow, but never, never, today.

MRS. HOWE (*smiling*). Then let infallibility speak—today.

FRANKLIN. Gentlemen, Infallibility says, “If—you will not hear reason, then she will rap your knuckles.”

HOWE. So—if England back Hutchinson——?

FRANKLIN. I fear—war.

LEE. Fear, sir? Hope!

FRANKLIN. In my opinion, there never was a good war waged—nor a bad peace concluded.

MRS. HOWE. There spoke the friend of all mankind.

LEE. There spoke the friend of England, not America.

MRS. HOWE. Blessed are the peacemakers.

FRANKLIN. Cursed are the peacemakers.

HOWE. Not Dr. Franklin!

FRANKLIN. At home I am reviled as friend to England; here I am despised as an American——

BEAUMARCHAIS. Come to France, sir! France adores you.

MRS. HOWE (*sharply*). No doubt France would like a finger in the American pie.

HOWE. Dr. Franklin, go with me to America. You use your well-known influence for peace—do not mistake me—the king would provide you with adequate, nay generous compensation——

FRANKLIN. I trust I do mistake you. Such compensation would be considered a bribe to betray my country.

HOWE (*reddening*). Who mentioned bribes?

FRANKLIN. They were not mentioned, my lord. No one would have such great bad taste, my lord.

(HOWE *subsides*.)

MRS. HOWE. You will not work for peace?

FRANKLIN. 'Tis my profession, but without adequate—beg pardon, generous compensation.

HOWE. You will go with me to America?

FRANKLIN. The battle is here.

DESMOND. You fight England?

SERVANT *enters*.

FRANKLIN. No, sir, I do not fight England; I fight the battle *of* England against——

SERVANT (*announces*). His excellency, Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts!

STOREMONT. Good gad!

HUTCHINSON *enters*. MRS. HOWE *advances to meet him*.

MRS. HOWE. Thomas Hutchinson, what's this we hear of you? Setting his Majesty's colonies by the ears!

HUTCHINSON. I, Ma'am? I would crop their ears if I could, the rebellious knaves! But, your pardon, Ma'am, I have sought out Dr. Franklin——

MRS. HOWE. Tea is served in the East Garden, gentlemen; let us leave these colonials to fight it out together.

DESMOND (*with a chuckle*). Damme if I like to leave you undefended, Doctor! Hutchinson's breathing vengeance.

MRS. HOWE (*serenely*). I'm sorry for Hutchinson; he's in the minority.

*All go out by smaller entrance but FRANKLIN and HUTCHINSON. Several times during the following conversation STOREMONT passes through at back, from East Garden through and up steps, and back again, eagerly observant. FRANKLIN remains stationary throughout scene. HUTCHINSON paces to and fro.*

HUTCHINSON. Mr. Franklin, I have come to see if you take seriously the impudent demand of a pack of rebels?

FRANKLIN (*smiling*). They pay me my salary, your Excellency.

HUTCHINSON. No, Mr. Franklin, they do not; I have given orders to stop its payment.

FRANKLIN. 'Ah! A stroke worthy of your Excellency!

HUTCHINSON (*pompously*). In itself the petition has no weight; presented by you, I do you the compliment to fear it. You have been here in London, worming yourself into popularity with the king, while I have been mobbed, sir, mobbed in the streets of Boston for carrying out his orders——



FRANKLIN. Orders which *you* advised.

HUTCHINSON. Advised? Yes, I did advise 'em, I advised that the people of Boston should be straight-jacketed. And who has a better right to advise His Majesty's government, than His Majesty's governor?

FRANKLIN. And who has a better right to resent such advice than the people who suffer from it?

HUTCHINSON. Damme! How'd the people of Boston know anything about it?

FRANKLIN. Who had a better right to know than the people of Boston?

HUTCHINSON. Damn the people of Boston!

FRANKLIN. Not the *people*.

Have you ever heard the tale of the devil who showed the traveler in Hades that portion of hell where the dead rulers of the earth groaned in torment? No? Well, the traveler, having seen his fill, inquired, where were the rest of 'em?

"The rest?" cried the devil. "Here you see all the kings, princes and governors who have ever ruled on earth, so many that they have squeezed the common folk quite out of hell! What the devil would the man have?"

HUTCHINSON (*impatiently*). Well?

FRANKLIN. Well——?

HUTCHINSON. I'll remain governor and—take my chances.

FRANKLIN (*courteously*). Your Excellency should not then have fled your office.

HUTCHINSON. Fled? Pshaw! I've come to fight for it. To fight you—and your petition.



FRANKLIN. Your Excellency's first play—cuts off my salary—a handicap, I confess. My play—I petition your dismissal. Your play——?

HUTCHINSON. I protest your petition before the Privy Council.

FRANKLIN (*startled*). The Privy Council?

HUTCHINSON (*with honest satisfaction*). The Privy Council!

FRANKLIN. Ah, your Excellency, if we play before the Privy Council—the corruptest body of men in England, I fear——

HUTCHINSON. You do well to fear, Mr. Franklin.

FRANKLIN. I fear I shall lose my king. Good-day, Mr. Hutchinson.

HUTCHINSON *goes*. STOREMONT, *who has been hovering about, enters quickly*.

STOREMONT. Damme, Doctor, who'd have thought the sending of those cursed letters would have caused such a rumpus?

FRANKLIN (*tranquilly*). I did, my lord.

STOREMONT. The deuce you did! Does he know you sent 'em?

FRANKLIN. Not yet.

STOREMONT. You mean—— (*Thoroughly dismayed.*) you won't tell?

FRANKLIN. My actions bear daylight.

STOREMONT. But I'd be first man stung.

FRANKLIN. Not you, sir! Hutchinson first, then I!

STOREMONT. But damme, I don't want to be stung at all. My position in France—ambassador, you know! The letters—I had a perfect right to show 'em to you—but it would work me the devil were it known.

FRANKLIN. It shall not be known—through me.

STOREMONT. Pox me, I'm grateful.

SALLY FRANKLIN *runs in, from East Garden.*

SALLY FRANKLIN. Oh Uncle, a monstrous disagreeable man, Mr. Whately, said such horrid things about Americans, and Mr. Lee defended us. Oh sir, is not Mr. Lee wonderful?

FRANKLIN. Um!

WHATELY, BEAUMARCHAIS *and* LEE *enter.*  
WHATELY *with tea and* BEAUMARCHAIS *with sugar.*

WHATELY. We've brought ye tea, Miss Franklin.

SALLY FRANKLIN. I don't drink tea; no American drinks tea.

WHATELY (*teasingly*). Treason!

SALLY FRANKLIN (*earnestly*). Patriotism.

WHATELY. I dare swear Dr. Franklin drinks it.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*turning to him*). Do you?

FRANKLIN (*smiling*). Don't tell.

WHATELY. Must the Boston rebels have the monopoly of tea parties? Greedy beggars!

FRANKLIN. There's no tax upon this tea, my child, but a Thank-you. I think you need not scruple.

*Enter* HOWE, *from East Garden.*

HOWE. Dr. Franklin, Madam awaits you.

FRANKLIN (*turning with alacrity*). Ah, is Madame Helvetius here?

HOWE. I meant my sister. She has a plan to move the king in your behalf.

FRANKLIN. Ah, sir, kings and bears worry their keepers! (*He goes with STOREMONT and HOWE.*)

SALLY FRANKLIN (*to WHATELY*). I'll take the tea—and thank you vastly, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Hast heard the newest recipe for tea?

“Lovely woman is the sugar——” (*He passes sugar.*)

LEE (*strolls over to table and fingers chess men*). A few hogsheads of tea—the best East India, emptied into the depths of Boston Bay, brews the best tea.

WHATELY. Maybe—for rebels, sir. I trust it will prove bitter——

LEE. Rebels? The word hath charm. (*They glower.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. Center your attention on my recipe, Mademoiselle!

“Lovely woman is the sugar;  
Men the spoons will always be;  
Matrimony is hot water;  
So we make a cup of tea” (*A pause.*)

Mademoiselle, do you like the recipe?

SALLY FRANKLIN. 'Twould depend upon the spoon.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Try me. (*She smiles shyly.*)

WHATELY. Miss Franklin, was the tea good?

SALLY FRANKLIN. I fear the Boston Tea Party has spoiled my taste, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Were you there?

SALLY FRANKLIN (*nods. All, amazed, draw nearer*). When the patriots dressed as Indian braves and dashed down to the wharf and upset the tea into the water, well, I dressed up as a boy—and I got quite near and I helped to push a chest in—I did indeed.

WHATELY. Good gad! (*He looks at her admiringly.*)

SALLY FRANKLIN. And we made a song about it—a very saucy song.

WHATELY. Sing it, Mistress!

SALLY FRANKLIN (*shaking her head*). It would not like you.

WHATELY. You owe us something for that chest of tea.

SALLY (*nothing loath, half sings, half recites the song.*)

#### SONG.

“There was an old lady lived over the sea,  
 And she was an Island Queen;  
 Her daughter lived off in a far countree,  
 With an ocean of water between.  
 The old lady’s pockets were filled with gold,  
 But never contented was she;  
 She called on her daughter to pay her a tax  
 Of threepence a pound on her tea.



The tea was conveyed to the daughter's door  
All down by the ocean's side;  
And the angry girl poured out every pound  
In the dark and boiling tide.  
And then she called to the Island Queen:  
'Oh Mother, dear Mother,' quoth she,  
'Your tea you may have when 'tis steeped  
enough,  
But never a tax from me!'"

(SALLY slowly pours the dregs of tea on ground.)

WHATELY. Gad, Miss Franklin, sing that song in London, ye'll be the toast of the town.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*defiantly*). 'Twas monstrous fun. (*Then she droops.*) But my uncle—he disapproves the whole affair.

WHATELY. He would. Why, your uncle's almost English, my dear. He's vastly popular—for a colonial.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*with dancing eyes*). Don't you like us colonials in London?

WHATELY. I like—you—but your colonials—good lord!

LEE (*stiffly*). Good day, sir. (*He walks off.*)

SALLY FRANKLIN. He really minds——! (*She laughs.*)

WHATELY. So much the better! It's more private now. How can we infuriate M. Beaumarchais? (*He looks at him smiling.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. Monsieur, the more infuriated, the more I stand my ground. Privacy, Miss Franklin, is the delight of the English. Now the French feel no false shame in making a public declaration.

Miss Franklin, come over the water! When the time comes when "her union with England is no longer America's pride," we'll get ye the French alliance.

WHATELY. What d'you mean, sir, with your "French Alliance"?

BEAUMARCHAIS. I mean—I am the man.

WHATELY. Ye talk in riddles. It's my impression ye're damned spy, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*airily*). Man alive, I'm a poet. 'Tis my business to bring hero and lady to mutual embraces. (WHATELY *glowers*.)

SALLY. Gentlemen! (*Both turn to her.*) Good-day! (*She courtesies.*) I go to seek my uncle.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*offers arm*). Permit me!

WHATELY (*offers arm*). Permit me! Miss Franklin, have no trust in the declaration of these false, perfidious French; they seek their own advantage.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Miss Franklin, do you trust the English declaration that they seek America's welfare?

SALLY. Sirs, I shall trust in America's declaration—of independence. (*She bows, declining either arm.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. Try it, Miss Franklin, but remember, if you do not cross the water to France, I cross to America. (*Bows and goes.*)

WHATELY (*frowning*). Damn coxcomb! What's he after—trying to stir up trouble with our American subjects——?

SALLY FRANKLIN (*quenchingly*). *Our* subjects! *Ours!*



Every person in England seems to jostle himself alongside of the king—, talks of “OUR subjects in the colonies.”

WHATELY. I have a claim—on you, at least, Mistress.

SALLY FRANKLIN. A claim?

WHATELY. A claim for that chest of tea you pushed into the water. (*She turns to go.*) Wait, Miss Franklin, lest I swear out a warrant—

SALLY FRANKLIN (*in dismay*). You wouldn't dare?

WHATELY (*catching up with her*). Pay me then—full measure. (*He kisses her roughly.*)

SALLY FRANKLIN (*horrified*). Mr. Whately!!

FRANKLIN *and others enter; she runs to FRANKLIN. Servants follow with torches which they set up in garden and then retire.*

SALLY FRANKLIN (*half crying*). Oh uncle, I'm aching to go back to Boston. I do not like this England and I despise all Englishmen.

MRS. HOWE. My dear child, there are Englishman *and* Englishmen.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*defiantly*). Yes, Ma'am, and the only good Englishmen are Americans.

*They laugh good-naturedly.*

HOWE. True! Dr. Franklin's the best Englishman of my acquaintance.

MRS. HOWE. You tread the velvet path of universal popularity.

HOWE. Use that influence for peace. Do not present that petition.

FRANKLIN. My lord, that petition is become a test to try this land of England.

*Two SERVANTS enter with torches. They stand, one on either side of entrance.*

SERVANT. Lord Hyde! His lordship, the Earl of Gower.

*These men enter. MRS. HOWE courtesies low.*

HOWE (*claiming FRANKLIN'S attention*). If England fail then, in this single instance? If she fail once in wisdom and in justice——?

FRANKLIN.. If she fail *once* ! ! ! ! ! Your lordship is very witty!

SERVANT (*announces*). Madame Helvetius!

MADAME HELVETIUS *enters and courtesies low.*

FRANKLIN (*advances quickly*). Ah, Madame, rescue me from the wits! (*He offers his arm.*)

MADAME HELVETIUS. O la, Monsieur! (*Turns to others.*) And him they call, "The great diplomat!" (*She takes his arm: they pass quickly out.*)

*The others stare, then follow as though drawn by magnet.*

CURTAIN

## ACT II

*In the center of the room, back under an enormous canopy of maroon velvet, embroidered with the Arms of England, stands the President's chair, on a dais. On each side is an embrasure, a kind of Gothic window opening on corridor. In front of the president's chair and extending to right is a long narrow table, around which chairs are placed for the Privy Councilors.*

FRANKLIN'S position is at the right in front of a huge stone fireplace. HOWE and HYDE sit near FRANKLIN; WEDDERBURN, directly opposite. SANDWICH sits below the President. GUILDFORD, DESMOND and the other lords are seated with them.

*Two small doors lead, on the right to the President's chamber, on the left to corridor.*

HUTCHINSON, SANDWICH and WEDDERBURN, are conferring, as curtain rises.

WEDDERBURN. You're up against it, your Excellency! I'll do my best, but, gad! England can't prop up a man of straw——

HUTCHINSON (*furiously*). Sir!!!

WEDDERBURN. A man who cuts and runs must make out a strong case—— (*Raises his hand to stay HUTCHINSON'S explosion.*) I know, I know the king backs you—secretly, but Franklin faces you—openly; and your chances are not worth *that* (*Snaps his fingers.*) against him.

HUTCHINSON (*sulkily*). He has you people well at heel; now in Boston he is looked down on.

SANDWICH. How's that?

HUTCHINSON. They think he's too English.

WEDDERBURN. Ah! That won't discredit him here, y'know. Has he no weak spot? Does he crave money? Office?

SANDWICH. Accuse him of wishing to stand for governor.

HUTCHINSON. He's not such a fool. But, damme sir, *I* stand for England and the king.

SANDWICH (*sneeringly*). Planted on all four feet.

HUTCHINSON. Eh?

SANDWICH. Like Balaam's ass! You fool, how'd you ever let the rebels find out about the letters you writ Whately?

HUTCHINSON. Someone whose interest it was to stir up strife sent the letters back to Boston.

WEDDERBURN. Who?

HUTCHINSON. Who but the brother—damn him!

WEDDERBURN. As I understand—the petition is based on them? (HUTCHINSON *nods*.) How if you declared 'em forged?

HUTCHINSON. Damme, they're *not* forged! In my own handwriting! And I'll uphold 'em in the teeth of the thirteen colonies—and be damned to 'em!

SANDWICH. Pox me! A pretty outlook!

HUTCHINSON (*anxiously*). But sir, those letters were private. As men of honor, the Privy Council can't remove me from office for writing private letters, eh, Wedderburn?



WEDDERBURN. Sir, most of the Privy Council have lost heavily by this Boston tea affair, which you should have prevented——

HUTCHINSON. Sir, I——

WEDDERBURN. Yes, yes, you couldn't—but you should have; so through your negligence their pocket-books have been emptied—and you ask me to work upon their sentimental scruples—their punctiliousness as to private letters! You jest, Mr. Hutchinson.

HUTCHINSON (*stares, then with brightening face*). Oh good gad, I have more substantial reasons; I am well supplied with guineas by the king.

WEDDERBURN (*also brightens*). Ah! Come to my chambers, sir; we'll arrange everything. (*He stands aside that HUTCHINSON may pass out, right, then he turns to SANDWICH.*) Your idea was good, m'lord, that Franklin would oust Hutchinson as governor; work it up. (*SANDWICH nods; WEDDERBURN follows HUTCHINSON.*)

*Enter DESMOND and GUILDFORD. from corridor.*

SANDWICH. Egad, man, what stung ye?

GUILDFORD. Howe's been at me. Morning, Bevil!

DASHWOOD *enters*.

DESMOND. Do my eyes deceive me? Up and dressed at eleven! You were going it good and hard at three when I left you.

DASHWOOD. Made night of it! Thish mornin' had to get here—promised Howe. When does the show come off?

GUILDFORD. We were summoned for eleven.

DASHWOOD (*Sitting down and speaking appealingly*). Some'dy tell me, who's thish Hutchinson? Wha'sh he done?

DESMOND. Egad, man, where've you been?

SANDWICH. In his cups.

DASHWOOD. No shur! Not in m' right mind ever at eleven!

DESMOND. Everyone's heard of runaway Governor Hutch——

DASHWOOD. I haven't—or 't pashed out 'tother ear. Who ish he?

GUILDFORD. American.

DASHWOOD (*pathetically*). North or South American?

DESMOND. Wake up, you fool; you're drunk.

GUILDFORD. He's from the colonies.

DASHWOOD. Why didn' he shtay there—an' not bother us?

GUILDFORD. Well, y'see, Boston or Massachusetts——

DASHWOOD. Beastly names! I never can remember—is Bohston in Mass-a'-chusetts, or Mass-a'-chusetts in Boston?

SANDWICH. Lord, who cares? Some place or other over there has raised a row to kick out Hutchinson and put Franklin in.

DASHWOOD (*brightens*). Why I know Franklin. He's my frien'; he sings a damn good song. Halloa there, m'lor' North!



NORTH *and* STOREMONT *enter*.

NORTH. Gentlemen, where are the others?

GUILDFORD. At the races!

NORTH (*with irritation*). Bah! Sirs, ye all know the king's desire as to Dr. Franklin?

DASHWOOD. No, I don't. Thish Franklin—ish he here on trial?

GUILDFORD. No, no, man!

DASHWOOD (*complacently*). No, no, it's Hutch—runaway Governor Hutch; Franklin's all righ'.

NORTH. Gentlemen, it is worth much to the king that Hutchinson be sustained and Franklin dismissed.

DASHWOOD. How much?

HOWE *enters*.

DASHWOOD (*advancing toward him*). Ah, sir, behold my virtue; I am here.

HOWE. Gentlemen, I appeal to you who know Dr. Franklin; the petition he presents on behalf of Massachusetts——

DASHWOOD (*correcting*). Mass-a'-chusetts.

HOWE (*stiffly*). Massachusetts, I beg of you to consider without prejudice.

GUILDFORD. Egad, I'm not prejudiced; I'm open to conviction, eh, Desmond?

SANDWICH. Bah! Franklin would oust Hutchinson and be governor himself.

HOWE (*gravely*). Your lordship is not serious.

(*Turns to others.*) Gentlemen, you are English; you will see fair play?

DASHWOOD. I shay "fair play!" Franklin's a good fellow—damn good!

SANDWICH. What does the fellow want but to be tried by's peers!

HOWE. Who here is peer to Dr. Franklin?

DASHWOOD. Didn' ye know m' first Lord of Sandwich rechieved a peerage for th' invention of peerless sandwiches? Ha, ha! Eh, Sandwich?

SANDWICH. A stale jest! (*He takes DASHWOOD aside. DASHWOOD plays the incorruptible but ends by pocketing the bribe. The others break up into small groups.*)

STOREMONT (*to NORTH*). My lord, when do I get my instructions for Paris?

NORTH. Look you, sir, in the event of a rebellion, France may seek to aid the rebels——

STOREMONT. Do you really mean you fear revolt in th' colonies?

NORTH. Fear? No! There are fat lands in America.

MRS. HOWE *enters with SALLY FRANKLIN and BEAUMARCHAIS.*

DASHWOOD (*ogling them*). Ladies! O I shay! Ladies at a meetin' of the council? Petticoats better shtay away.

MRS. HOWE (*ingratiatingly*). My lord—sure your lordship would not be so monstrous uncivil; you have a reputation to sustain. Child, this is Lord

Dashwood, the naughtiest man in London. Ben Franklin's niece, my lord!

DASHWOOD (*eyeing her*). Ye gods! (*Makes a motion to his pocket and calls over his shoulder to SANDWICH.*) Sandwich, take back your dirty bribe; I stand by Franklin. Get chairs, Howe, and be damned to you!

HOWE (*coming to them*). This is most irregular. (*He draws MRS. Howe aside to back.*)

DASHWOOD. Miss Franklin, we'll have to give the Doctor all he wantsh.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*courtesying*). I thank you. Oh——

WHATELY *enters from President's chamber; she shrinks away.*

WHATELY. Gentlemen, Earl Gower would speak with ye.

DASHWOOD. Spoil sport! It's a ruse. Miss Franklin, be Franklin's attorney, ma'am, and he'll win, sure. (*He bows low.*)

*All pass out but MRS. HOWE, SALLY FRANKLIN, WHATELY and BEAUMARCHAIS. HOWE leads MRS. HOWE to seat at one of the spectator's windows at back before he goes.*

WHATELY (*to SALLY FRANKLIN*). Ma'am, I trust you were not—er—offended by my—er—declaration the other day?

SALLY FRANKLIN (*looking about for MRS. HOWE*). Sir?

WHATELY. It surprised myself, begad! I'm not an admirer of things American—in general.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do you admire—say—Prussia?

WHATELY (*regarding him insolently*). An upstart state, sir!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Tuscany? Spain?

WHATELY. Decadent!

BEAUMARCHAIS. My own fair land? Yet, sir, you should admire America, at least; America is English.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*hastily*). She's not; she's Indian!

BEAUMARCHAIS. I should say—*Americans* are English.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*stamping her foot*). Never! (*She moves toward MRS. HOWE.*)

WHATELY (*following*). Oh, I say, Miss Franklin! Don't be so cruel, my dear! But then, ye Franklins—ye are all heart-breakers. (*She joins MRS. HOWE and sits.*)

MRS. HOWE. There they come! Get up, my dear! (*She rises.*)

SALLY FRANKLIN (*rising reluctantly*). They do look monstrous fine; but I do hate to rise for any man.

*The members of the Privy Council enter, GOWER, NORTH, SANDWICH, STOREMONT, HOWE, HYDE, DESMOND, GUILDFORD, DASHWOOD and others; they are followed by WEDDERBURN and HUTCHINSON.*

GOWER (*taking president's chair, calls room to order*). Gentlemen, this meeting of the Privy Coun-



cil has been called by His Majesty to listen to a petition from our subjects in America. Bid Dr. Franklin enter.

FRANKLIN *enters with LEE from right and takes his stand. He is dressed in the suit of Manchester velvet which he wears in Acts IV and V. Several rise and bow as he enters.*

GOWER. Sir, who are you?

FRANKLIN. Benjamin Franklin

GOWER. State your mission.

FRANKLIN. My lords, I pray you to give my petition honorable hearing. The clamour of multitudes; it is good to attend to it. It is wiser to foresee and avoid it. It is wise, when neither foreseen nor avoided to correct the measures that gave occasion to it. I am glad you have *that* wisdom. (*He presents petition.*)

DASHWOOD (*sotto voce*). Have we?

GOWER. Are you ready, gentlemen, to hear the "clamour of multitudes?"

SANDWICH. Aye, get it over——

GOWER (*lifts petition and reads*). "To the King's most Excellent Majesty: Most gracious sovereign, we your Majesty's loyal subjects——"

SANDWICH. A libel! Seek out Dr. Johnson and find what "loyal" means.

HUTCHINSON. Damning the king! Refusing to pay taxes!

NORTH. In his eyes "traitor" spells "American."

DASHWOOD. Then he's a damn poor speller



HYDE (*quietly*). Gentlemen, fair play!

GOWER (*reads on through remarks which follow. The parts of the petition which he reads are entirely drowned at times by the clamour*). “We, your Majesty’s loyal subjects, beg leave to lay this humble petition before your Majesty. Nothing but the sense of duty we owe our sovereign——”

SANDWICH. Lord, if they’d only coin their sense of duty into pounds and pence! I lost a cool two thousand by their cursed tea-party.

GUILDFORD. I too!

DESMOND. I lost a hundred.

DASHWOOD. Who’s to pay?

} *They speak  
together.*

GOWER (*continues*). “——could induce us to remonstrate to your Majesty the mal-conduct of persons——” (*Looks up.*) This is tedious. I’ll curtail’t a trifle. (*Reads.*) “——grievances we have suffered——occasioned by your Majesty’s ministers being misinformed”——There’s one for you, North! “——we humbly conceive there has been a conspiracy of evil men——” That’s Hutchinson! “——Therefore we humbly pray——”

SANDWICH. Great insolence!

GOWER. “——your Majesty would be pleased to remove said Thomas Hutchinson who has by his afore-mentioned conduct rendered himself justly obnoxious to your loving subjects, and in his place send——”

SANDWICH (*explosively*). Benjamin Franklin!

GOWER. “——send one more pleasing to the humble folk of Massachusetts Bay.”

HUTCHINSON. A petition? A demand!

GOWER. What's England coming to when colonists dare scrawl such petitions?

HYDE. Rather, what is her fate if she will not give fair hearing?

GOWER. Fair hearing? I've read the gist; anyone may read the rest who's a mind to? (*He tosses petition on table.*)

HOWE, HYDE, STOREMONT, *bend over it.* DESMOND *picks up hat and makes for door;* SANDWICH *follows and detains him.*

DESMOND. I've got a horse races today; damme I must be off.

SANDWICH. Stay awhile; there's good sport coming. (*They return.*)

GOWER. Mr. Franklin, we'll hear you.

FRANKLIN. Gentlemen, as my country's agent—  
I—

GOWER. There I must set you right, Mr. Franklin; you are not agent.

FRANKLIN. I do not understand your lordship. I have the appointment in my pocket.

GOWER. You are *not* agent; Governor Hutchinson did not consent to your appointment. Is it not so, Mr. Hutchinson?

HUTCHINSON. I have never sanctioned the appointment of any agent. Damned meddlers!

FRANKLIN. The agent is appointed by the people; the sanction of the governor is not needed.

HUTCHINSON (*growing purple*). Not needed!

GOWER (*coldly*). I shall not dispute with you, Mr. Franklin. Though we do not recognize you as agent, still we'll hear you.

FRANKLIN. Gentlemen, I as the—mouthpiece (if the honorable court permit the word) of my countrymen, have this one merit, common to all old men—I long for peace.

NORTH (*hastily*). Peace with conditions.

FRANKLIN. Yes, one condition: The rights of Englishmen. My lords, Americans are England's sons, and not her bastards.

GOWER. Bah! We will talk of what you call your rights when you have paid for every pound of tea lost at your cursed riots.

FRANKLIN. And if we did so?

NORTH. Can you make that offer?

FRANKLIN (*to SANDWICH*). You lost two thousand pounds; (*To GUILDFORD*.) you several hundred. And others also?

DASHWOOD. I lost a bet. (*Mournfully*.)

FRANKLIN. Give us our rights; grant this petition; I pledge my private fortune you shall be repaid for every pound of tea.

DASHWOOD (*springing to his feet*). Hurray for Franklin!

DESMOND. Hear! Hear! That's the talk. (*All talk simultaneously*.)

GUILDFORD. An honest colonial! Good lord, what're we coming to?

STOREMONT. Give him his rights ; he's earned 'em.

NORTH (*trying to subdue the noise*). You are too late ; the king will see to it the rebels pay.

FRANKLIN. Gentlemen, on you today rests not the fate of Massachusetts only, but the future of England. If you deny justice to the colony, it will recoil most horribly against you.

NORTH. Is that a threat, Mr. Franklin?

FRANKLIN. My lord, I offered first to pay for the tea—a bribe—but according to custom here.

GOWER. You are insolent ; do you insinuate Englishmen take bribes?

FRANKLIN (*bowing*). Your lordship does not mistake me ; but those here present sure are incorruptible.

DASHWOOD. Damme, I'm not ! Mr. Franklin, I accept your offer as to the tea.

GUILDFORD. I too !

DESMOND. Good lord, yes.

GOWER. Gentlemen ! Gentlemen !

DASHWOOD (*gets up and bows formally*). My lords, I move we recall Hutchinson—he's here anyhow—and send Mr. Franklin to collect our taxes.

*Laughter and cries of Hear ! Hear !*

FRANKLIN. My lords, a better man might have been chosen—to speak——

DASHWOOD (*cries*). No, no ! You're the man !

FRANKLIN. But no man could have been chosen



who loves both countries with a greater love. (*Cry of Bravo!*) I—the colonies—love England; but gentlemen, the good-will of the governed will starve unless fed on the good deeds of the governors. Thomas Hutchinson misrepresents America to England and England to America. I petition his removal.

STOREMONT. I move we grant his petition!

DESMOND. ——an' go to dinner!

DASHWOOD. 'Ray for Franklin! (*Several rise.*)

GOWER. My lords, one moment! Mr. Hutchinson, will you speak in your defence? (*Those who had risen, subside with boredom.*)

HUTCHINSON. Defence? Damme, sirs, of what am I accused? Of loyalty, loyalty to the king! He dubbed me governor of Massachusetts. Did that mean m'lords, to rule for the colony or for the king? I thought the king! Was I right, m'lords, or wrong?

GOWER. There can be no question.

DASHWOOD (*sotto voce*). I'll bet my bottom sixpence 'twas for himself he ruled!

*Laughter.* GOWER *pounds for order.*

GOWER. Gentlemen, gentlemen, Mr. Wedderburn, the counsel for the crown!

WEDDERBURN (*advances slowly*). Mr. President—your honorable lordships! Mr. Franklin has—er—wandered from the point—a common practice when the case is weak. He accuses—but what proof does he offer as to these accusations? Mr. Hutchinson does not, I think, plead guilty.



FRANKLIN. They are based on Mr. Hutchinson's own letters, sir.

WEDDERBURN (*with polite surprise*). Letters? What letters?

HUTCHINSON (*staring*). Why, damme, sir, the letters we were discussing an hour ag—

WEDDERBURN *turns on him frowningly*.

GOWER (*crashing down gavel*). Silence, sir! (HUTCHINSON *collapses*.)

FRANKLIN (*smiling slightly*). The letters Mr. Hutchinson writ to Mr. Thomas Whately.

WEDDERBURN. This petition was based on them? (FRANKLIN *bows*.) I do not understand quite clearly yet? A petition to dismiss a loyal servant of the crown is based on certain letters—why, these letters may be forged!

FRANKLIN. Does Mr. Hutchinson declare them false, sir?

GOWER. Mr. Hutchinson, you hear Mr. Franklin's question?

HUTCHINSON. No, sir, they were not false, but they were private, sir! Sacredly private!

WEDDERBURN. Private, your Excellency? Then how—?

HUTCHINSON. My friendship was betrayed; my private letters were sent back to Boston, and published. (*He turns direct on WHATELY*.) There stands the man who betrayed his brother's friendship—Mr. Will Whately!

WHATELY (*greatly surprised and indignant*). My

lords, Governor Hutchinson lies. I never saw those letters——

HUTCHINSON. Ye're a thief and a scoundrel!

WHATELY. You shall answer for this——

HUTCHINSON. Name the day!

GOWER *pounds for order.*

FRANKLIN. Gentlemen, this is folly. (*All turn to him.*) I sent the letters to America.

WHATELY. *You?*

FRANKLIN. I!

WHATELY. How came you by 'em?

FRANKLIN. Sir, I came by them honourably, from one who prefers to remain——unknown.

GOWER. Small wonder!

NORTH. Dr. Franklin, your silence speaks most damnably against you.

WEDDERBURN. The truth at last! Sirs, I accuse him openly——this Franklin! He stole the letters, sent 'em to America. And for what purpose does he stoop to such an ignoble deed? Why does Franklin, the man of science, the philosopher——purloin letters? Why, he too has an itching palm and craves——what but the governorship of Massachusetts. (*A hiss.*) I hope you will brand the man for the honour of this country and of mankind. Into what companies can he hereafter go with unembarrassed face?

SANDWICH. Hear! Hear!

WEDDERBURN. Men will now watch him with a

jealous eye ; they will hide their papers from him and lock up their escritaires. He will esteem it libel to be called a "man of letters."

DESMOND. Hit! A hit!

WEDDERBURN. And he—the postmaster-general to the colonies!

SANDWICH. Not from today! Our letters are no longer safe in his keeping.

HYDE (*indignantly*). Gentlemen, are we trying Dr. Franklin, or Governor Hutchinson? Those letters, sirs, were writ on *public* affairs, by Thomas Hutchinson, a *public* officer, to Thomas Whately, a *public* official, their intent to produce disastrous *public* measures. I hold those letters *public* in their nature.

GOWER. Pshaw!

FRANKLIN. Gentlemen, my wish in sending those letters was to let the people know—the people's business. Secrecy—closed doors and the like, never begot an honest child.

HOWE (*warmly*). Truth seeks light. Will you quarrel with the man who throws open the shutters? The public should know the public's business.

GUILDFORD. Damme, Howe, you don't hold with the public being let in on all of our proceedings?

*Cries of No! No!*

DASHWOOD. Damn the public!

DESMOND. Wash your dirty linen in private!

HYDE. Gentlemen, if one man, Hutchinson, can plunge America into chaos through secret repre-

sentations, who can say the time shall not come when a few men, closeted from the world, responsible to none, shall secretly and violently plunge England to disaster?

GOWER. And this to the *Privy Council!* Gentlemen, if these sentiments rule the day, the Privy Council may disband. If the public is to be let in, if Tom and Dick are to censure our proceedings, where is England's glory? The fellow on the street whose voice is loudest, he will prevail. We will be ruled by the grooms in our stables. No, gentlemen, privacy is as necessary in public as in private——

HUTCHINSON. Gentlemen, if you dismiss me, if you humiliate me for fear of the *people*—a future governor will serve—*whom?* Put yourself the question, m'lords! Your colonial revenues will go to swell the coffers of—the colony! And where will be your snug returns?

GUILDFORD (*in an awed voice*). The question in a nutshell!

DASHWOOD (*uncomfortably*). Gad! He's right!

SANDWICH (*jumping up*). I move Dr. Franklin's petition be rejected with contempt such as to brand the man—the bitterest, most rebellious of our subjects!

FRANKLIN. Will you hear me, lords? (*Hisses.*) I am not here on trial; I shall not seek to justify myself to *this* council. Forget me! I plead not for myself—but for my country——

SANDWICH. To Newgate, thief!

GOWER. Bah, you are a traitor!

FRANKLIN. Traitor, my lord, to England?



HUTCHINSON. And a rebel! (*Hisses.*)

FRANKLIN. Will you deny my right, lords, to a hearing—(*Louder hisses*)—the right of every Englishman——

SANDWICH. You're not English! You're nothing but a damned American!

NORTH. Americans have no rights; they lost their rights when they became Americans.

FRANKLIN. No rights? Why that, my lord, is a signal for——

NORTH. Rebellion?

FRANKLIN. No, sir, revolution! (*He draws himself very erect.*)

*All the men present not standing, spring noisily to their feet, pushing their chairs hastily back.*

FRANKLIN. Gentlemen, my country is answered.

CURTAIN

### ACT III

*Two years of irritation have succeeded the scene in the cock-pit. America has stated her Declaration of Independence, but has not proved it. In fact, were her main contention granted, she might even yet renounce it.*

*Sensing this, England sends HOWE, armed with words, to talk brotherly love and reconciliation to America's commissioners, deputed to meet him.*

*The meeting-place, a room taken by FRANKLIN in a house on Staten Island, has large folding doors*



*at the back, flanked by Dutch portraits. Several stiff chairs stand about the walls. On the right is a large fireplace with candles and hour-glass on shelf.*

FRANKLIN *is seated in a chair by the fire, reading letters; at his elbow is a Declaration of Independence, rolled.*

*At his feet, on a cushion, MISS FRANKLIN sits, knitting.*

SALLY FRANKLIN (*looks up, yawns, pulls the "Declaration" from the table and studies it*). Uncle, d'you know why Congress did not ask *you* to pen the Declaration of Independence?

FRANKLIN. Because Mr. Jefferson could better me.

SALLY FRANKLIN. No! (*She shakes her head.*) They were afraid you'd put a joke in it.

FRANKLIN (*slightly nettled*). Everything's the better for a joke . . . even a declaration.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*demurely*). Is that the way you win the ladies, sir? (*He pinches her ear and resumes work.*) Uncle, are you going to believe what Lord Howe says?

FRANKLIN. He's come three thousand miles across the water to say it.

SALLY FRANKLIN. Attend to me: Is there the faintest—remotest—tiniest—ghost of a chance that he can persuade you to—back-water?

FRANKLIN (*teasingly*). Think of the honour I should win in England!

SALLY FRANKLIN. And a suit of tar-and-feathers in America!

FRANKLIN. You think so?

SALLY FRANKLIN. I *know* so. United we stand.

FRANKLIN. To tar-and-feather, my child, is not the practice of the best society.

SALLY FRANKLIN. Uncle—I'm in earnest.

FRANKLIN. Then knit, my child.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*pouting*). Oh, woman's province!

FRANKLIN. "Because of a nail, the shoe was lost;  
Because of the shoe the horse was  
lost;  
Because of the horse the message  
was lost;  
Because of the message the kingdom  
was lost."

SALLY FRANKLIN (*knitting vigorously*). My nail shall be done by night. No one shall accuse *me* of dallying.

FRANKLIN. You mean—they accuse *me*? (SALLY *nods her head vigorously*.) My dear child, to serve the public faithfully, and at the same time to please it entirely—is impracticable.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*clicking her needles*). 'After the way they flouted you. . . .

FRANKLIN. That was mere personal abuse, my dear.

SALLY FRANKLIN. No, sir! Those brickbats were hurled straight at the thirteen colonies and you—were innocent by-stander.

FRANKLIN. Well—the thirteen colonies have answered.

SALLY FRANKLIN. Oh, I know! (*She gets to her feet and declaims.*) "When, in the course of human events it becomes necessary——" Every school-child in America knows it, but—uncle, will our grandchildren learn it?

FRANKLIN (*smiling*). Who's the man?

SALLY FRANKLIN (*leaning over the back of his chair*). Let's go to Paris, and win France to help us!

*A knock at the door.*

FRANKLIN. Go, child, admit my fellow-commissioners.

SALLY *opens door, courtesies to ADAMS and RUTLEDGE who enter, and herself vanishes.*

FRANKLIN. Mr. Adams! Mr. Rutledge!

ADAMS. Good-day, Dr. Franklin!

RUTLEDGE. Good-day, sir! Have you heard yet from Howe?

FRANKLIN. His ship's at anchor; he's due here at eleven.

*They draw up chairs.*

RUTLEDGE. D'you think, sir, he has power to do anything but talk?

ADAMS. His credentials to Congress spoke of power to compromise with advantage to England and the United Colonies.

RUTLEDGE (*correcting*). United States, sir!

ADAMS (*stiffly*). I quote his letter.

RUTLEDGE. United States! How little we

dreamed—Dr. Franklin, is it more than a dream—*(Takes up Declaration.)*—spite of these—hot from the press? *(He holds it up against mantel mischievously.)* Damme, doctor, let's pin it up to welcome Howe—just for the joke!

ADAMS *(annoyed)*. It's no mere flimsy piece of bravado, sir!

RUTLEDGE *(disappointed)*. Oh, very well! *(He brings it back.)*

FRANKLIN. We need the Declaration for backbone—not for display.

ADAMS *(flaring up)*. What d'you mean, sir? D'you mean America don't stand bravely and stiffly against England's domination?

FRANKLIN. I mean—we need arms, powder, ships, gold, discipline. I mean *(Tapping papers on desk.)* I have here the answer of our agent in Holland. He writes that every nation of Europe wishes us well——

RUTLEDGE. Good! Good!

FRANKLIN *(dryly)*. And declines to help us.

*A pause.*

FRANKLIN. Save—France.

RUTLEDGE. And France?

FRANKLIN. France has not answered—as yet.

ADAMS *(bursting out)*. Good God, sir, I believe even at this eleventh hour you'd crawl on your knees to England.

FRANKLIN *(quietly)*. Not to England!

RUTLEDGE *rises and reverses hour glass.*



FRANKLIN. The eleventh hour—and here comes Howe!

RUTLEDGE (*soberly*). The twelfth hour will decide.

HOWE *is admitted*. FRANKLIN *shows great cordiality*; ADAMS and RUTLEDGE *exchange glances*.

FRANKLIN. It gives me the greatest pleasure to meet again with your lordship. May I present Mr. Adams—Mr. Rutledge of the Continental Congress!

HOWE (*bowing*). Dr. Franklin! Gentlemen! Pray heaven you come in a disposition to meet me in fair compromise! England will go a long way toward you though she cannot recognize you as members of a rebel congress.

ADAMS (*hotly*). Then——

FRANKLIN (*tranquilly*). Call us what you please, my lord, and we will consider ourselves as we please.

HOWE. Dr. Franklin; your temper has ever been pacific.

RUTLEDGE (*under his breath*). Dammed pacific!

HOWE. You will join me in urging these gentlemen to listen to overtures of peace?

FRANKLIN. To listen? Gladly! Be seated, gentlemen! Let's strike the chords of agreement.

RUTLEDGE *brings chair for* HOWE.

HOWE. I bear with me assurances of a greatly improved disposition in England toward the colonies——



ADAMS (*leaning forward*). One moment, my lord! Does that mean the British troops will be removed from American soil?

HOWE. Hardly, sir, while the rebels are arming——

ADAMS. Ah! (*He leans back, folding his arms.*)

HOWE (*slightly annoyed*). But the king is disposed to look favourably toward you and to grant——

RUTLEDGE. To grant us the right to tax ourselves?

HOWE. Mr. Rutledge, the king could not give you that right; that is a question for Parliament.

RUTLEDGE. I see. (*He leans back folding his arms.*)

HOWE. But no doubt the offending acts would be revised if you lay down your arms.

RUTLEDGE (*courteously*). Very interesting; pray continue!

HOWE (*irritated, turns to FRANKLIN and ADAMS*). There is a very sincere desire——

ADAMS. You mean, my lord, if we deliver ourselves bound and gagged, ready for hanging, England will, perchance, not hang us, may even pat us on the back, but will give no security on the subject?

HOWE (*stiffly*). I can conceive no security for America better than that which depends on the wisdom of a British Parliament.

RUTLEDGE. I can—that which depends on the interest of an American Congress.

ADAMS (*quotes*). "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one nation——"

HOWE (*impatiently*.) Yes, yes! I've heard that, my good sir! (*Pause*.) That Declaration of Independence is an awkward obstacle; is there no way of treating back of that step of independence?

ADAMS. If you can re-build the cities you have burnt! If you can bring to life the Americans you have slain!

HOWE. Let us be sane! You would really dare be independent—a prey to France?

RUTLEDGE. Our liberties are not threatened by *France*, my lord.

HOWE. The king will yield much to prevent American trade from passing into French channels; but if yielding will not serve—we will fight to prevent it.

FRANKLIN. My lord, it seems to me no trade howsoever valuable is an object for which men may shed blood; the true means of securing commerce is the goodness and cheapness of commodities. And the profits of no trade can equal the expense of compelling it by fleets and armies.

HOWE. Ah, Dr. Franklin, there spoke—pardon me—Quaker cant. Good Lord, sir, did you think that England would lose America without fighting for her?

FRANKLIN. Did you think America would lose her liberty without fighting for it?

HOWE (*dismayed*.) Dr. Franklin, do you join with these, your countrymen, in their madness? You have nor arms nor army, nor powder nor gold to purchase it. Will you not yield?

FRANKLIN. Our claim to independence?

HOWE. Yes.

ADAMS (*sneeringly*). Oh, Dr. Franklin is of a yielding disposition. No doubt he even yet would crawl to England.

FRANKLIN (*with a fleeting glance at ADAMS*). Not to *England!*

HOWE. There can be no question of crawling. Return boldly; render your allegiance; I can guarantee you such a reception——! Dr. Franklin, the king empowers me to offer free pardon for every offence.

FRANKLIN (*murmurs*). Generous! He will pardon my every offence——? Go on, sir!

HOWE (*warmly*). More! He will liberally reward with high preferment those who shall assist in returning the colonies to their allegiance.

FRANKLIN (*rising*). Are these your credentials——

RUTLEDGE (*to HOWE*). Sir, you are mad!!!

FRANKLIN. Take your answer, sir! Yield—because we have nor arms nor armies, nor gold nor power to purchase? Sir, we will use paper for gold as long as it pays the printer: for army—we have George Washington—and for arms and powder, it may well be I shall crawl in the very dust—but not to England!

RUTLEDGE. Bravo! (*He and ADAMS instinctively take their stand alongside of FRANKLIN.*)

HOWE. I am sorry. I presume that means you will seek to give us employment in Europe?

FRANKLIN. Your lordship does not mistake me.

HOWE *turns to go*; FRANKLIN *follows holding out his hand*.

FRANKLIN. Lord Howe, the reward of peacemakers is always—tomorrow.

HOWE *clasps hands and goes*.

RUTLEDGE (*excitedly*). Dr. Franklin, for pure unadulterated cheek, I make you my best bow.

ADAMS. What did you mean by giving him “employment in Europe?” What country of Europe would dare defy England?

RUTLEDGE. Every country has refused.

FRANKLIN. Save France!

ADAMS. And France——?

FRANKLIN. Shall not refuse!

ADAMS. Big words, but we have sent many agents abroad; they have all come back with a flea in the ear.

FRANKLIN. If you want a thing done, go: if not, send!

ADAMS. WHAT? I? I go? I fear my duties in America would prevent.

FRANKLIN (*dryly*). Perhaps I could be spared. Look you, sirs, we are a little people, England a world power; but we have no enemies, she no friends. We must win gold and most important of all—recognition.

ADAMS. Chut! France’s recognition, though of value, is a side issue. The battle must be fought here.



FRANKLIN. We fight two battles, one at home, and one abroad and at the court of France. If we win France, we conquer.

RUTLEDGE. But if France prove unfriendly?

FRANKLIN. We'll to Spain! If Spain prove adverse, Prussia may be kind—but we *will* win.

SALLY FRANKLIN *pokes her head in. She is flushed and excited.*

SALLY FRANKLIN. Uncle, a—a gentleman waits on you, begs to see you, begs also that his name be not mentioned.

FRANKLIN. A strange request. (*To others.*) Have I your permission?

RUTLEDGE. We will withdraw.

FRANKLIN. No, no!

SALLY *ushers in* BEAUMARCHAIS: *she waits near door.*

FRANKLIN (*cordially*). Ah, we have met before.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*hastily*). In England—yes sir! But I must beg of your indulgence—— I have a care for this my head; in America I go by the name of 'Hortalez.' Gentlemen, consider my house as the head of all operations useful to your cause in Europe, and myself, as the most zealous partizan of your nation, the soul of your successes, and a man most profoundly filled with respectful esteem. Dr. Franklin I come with offers to the Continental Congress.

ADAMS. My good sir, Dr. Franklin is not the Continental Congress.

BEAUMARCHAIS. All that matters!



ADAMS. We will go.

FRANKLIN. Stay, gentlemen!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do not be offended that all Europe has heard of Dr. Franklin,—respects and honours. Therefore I am entrusted—I pray your confidence—to offer to your cause gold, arms, powder—what you want.

RUTLEDGE. From——?

BEAUMARCHAIS. France.

FRANKLIN. The French Government?

BEAUMARCHAIS (*smiling*). I did not say so, my dear sir.

RUTLEDGE. From private sources?

BEAUMARCHAIS. From the firm of Hortalez and Company.

ADAMS (*gloomily*). The name has a fictitious sound.

BEAUMARCHAIS. You will not find the gold and powder fictions.

RUTLEDGE. Will you not tell us more of yourself, sir?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Faith, yes! I am orator, if necessary; poet, for amusement; musician, occasionally. Ambitious through vanity; laborious, by necessity; but idle with delight!

ADAMS. Humph! An artist (*With scorn.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS (*rounding on him*). Yes sir, an artist! Nobility, money, rank, place, all that makes people so proud! What have you done for so much

good fortune? You have given yourself the trouble to be born. While for me, lost in a crowd of nobodies, I have had need of more knowledge simply to exist, than has been employed to govern all the Spains for a hundred years.

RUTLEDGE. What we seek to divine, sir, are your reasons for this offer.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Ah, gentlemen, I am playing with the idea of liberty. I dream of a free people which shall gather the down-trod of the earth and give them—liberty—equality—brotherhood—

FRANKLIN (*leaning toward him with interest*). Monsieur, do you see the seeds of such a state in us?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Dear Sir, I see—nothing. I hope—everything. I, who have been put in prison for a squib at royalty, have visions of a free press. I, whose work has been repeatedly banned from the stage, dream of free speech and free assembly.

ADAMS. You stride too fast, sir. Liberty from England is desirable—yes—but not license—never license!

BEAUMARCHAIS (*solemnly*). No! Never license! Never! (*There is a pause.*) I see you doubt me. I will be frank. Your life and liberty were little to me did I not come hither in pursuit of mine own happiness. Gentlemen, this is the one affair of my life into which I have put “more heart than head.” (*Glances toward MISS FRANKLIN, who flushes.*)

FRANKLIN (*smiling*). Say no more. We do ill to quarrel with the gifts of heaven. Will you wait our answer? My *niece* shall entertain you.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*goes to door and bending over MISS FRANKLIN'S hand, kisses it*). Sir, to your

cause I pledge "my life, my fortune and my sacred honor."

ADAMS (*as soon as the door shuts*). I do not approve, I do not approve at all. Let us stand alone and defy the world if need be.

FRANKLIN. And hang as rebels?

RUTLEDGE. Better to owe favor to none than to a Frenchy!

ADAMS. I distrust that man; he may be an English spy.

FRANKLIN. I know the man. I return with him to France.

RUTLEDGE. You! No, no! 'Twould be a difficult voyage and a dangerous! Should Britain catch you on the high seas——!!!!

FRANKLIN. Pshaw! Perhaps the best use for an old fag end; 'tis stuff for mending breeches.

ADAMS. *I think, Dr. Franklin, you take too much upon yourself. Your services have been valuable, most valuable; but, after all, you cannot speak for the Continental Congress.*

FRANKLIN. The Continental Congress has spoken, gentlemen. I have this morning received the appointment to Paris.

ADAMS *and* RUTLEDGE *pick up their hats and bow ceremoniously and stiffly, and turn to depart.*

FRANKLIN (*holding out his hands to both*). Gentlemen, let us hang together, or most assuredly we shall hang—separately.

CURTAIN,

## 'ACT IV

*The home of DE CHAUMONT, Passy, France, enthusiastically lent to FRANKLIN. 1778.*

*In a congenial atmosphere of French wit, FRANKLIN is enjoying himself, giving a dinner party, greatly to ARTHUR LEE'S disgust. But with Paris fêting him, making small images of him for adoration, even ARTHUR LEES can be treated with indulgence.*

*The news of reverses to American arms, constant during the last two years, must be hidden under a mask of gaiety; hence the salon is bright with candle light, the candles being set high in sconces. A fire is glowing, in huge stone chimney to right, on which is carved the Chaumont coat of arms. The room is panelled, with scenes by Watteau set in the panels. Small doors lead out to right (Street), and left (Interior). There is a small table near left door, on which are set candles and tapers for retiring. Another small table occupies center of room; on it is set a small statuette of FRANKLIN. Two very handsome chairs are drawn up to fire. Other straight chairs against wall. A large clock is set against the back wall.*

*The large curtained entrance at the back leads to the banquet room from which comes a song by the ABBÉ MORELLET, bursts of laughter and an occasional cry of "FRANKLIN."*

## SONG

"Let history our Franklin name,  
Grave on brass with pen of fame;  
'Tis to us the task belongs  
Him to sing in drinking songs.  
Come, begin,  
Drink and sing our Benjamin."



“Great in politics is he,  
 At the table gay and free;  
 Founding empires see him quaff  
 Flowing cups and hear him laugh.  
 Gay and grave as a Capuchin,  
 Such is our Benjamin.”

LEE *enters with* SERVANT. (*Possibly FRANKLIN'S old darky servant.*)

LEE. Tell him I'm here! (*SERVANT goes. LEE looks around with disgust.*) Positively the man wallows in popularity. No time for his country's interest! (*Takes up statuette, then replaces it with a sneer.*)

SONG (continues.)

“Like the eagle see him rise  
 Nobly daring to the skies,  
 And carry off as plunder  
 The earth-alarming thunder.  
 Happy sin  
 Of the clever Benjamin.”

FRANKLIN *enters from behind curtain.*

FRANKLIN. Come in, come in, sir!

LEE (*stiffly*). I fear I interrupt an affair of state.

FRANKLIN (*smiling*). A state of affairs not to your liking, eh? Mr. Lee, a sorry countenance will doom America's cause quicker——

LEE. Sir, I——

VOICE of MADAME HELVETIUS (*who appears between curtains*). Where is he? We will not spare Franklin's blushes.



*She enters, possibly carrying her famous poodle, followed by M. and MME. DE CHAUMONT, SALLY FRANKLIN, the ABBÉ MORELLET, and others.*

MME. HELVETIUS. Indeed sir, you shall not escape our poetry for Mr. Lee's prose. Sing, Abbé.

MORELLET (*bows and sings*).

“Never did mankind engage  
In a war with views more sage.  
They seek freedom with design  
To drink plenty of French wine.  
Such has been  
The intent of Benjamin.”

LEE. Madame Helvetius, I'll cap the Abbé's verses with one more true.

MADAME HELVETIUS (*doubtfully*). As good as the Abbé's?

LEE (*recites*).

Who doth always seek to try  
Have a finger in each pie?  
He forgets quite what his age is  
When he looks on pretty ladies.  
See him swill on Chaumont's wine!  
Such is our Benjamine.

FRANKLIN (*good-naturedly*). I'll confess when ladies are in question, my age is quite forgotten.

MADAME HELVETIUS. By the ladies! We pardon age for its wit and courtesy, even as we forgive insolence because of youth, dear Mr. Lee.

*A big, fat, smiling PASTRY-COOK enters bearing a huge cake with lighted candles.*

FRANKLIN. What's this?

COOK (*bowing as low as able*). Congratulations from zee pastry-cooks of Paris to Dr. Franklin on his fête. Ze zirteen plums—zey are ze zirteen colonies. (*He bows and departs, setting cake on center of table from which MADAME HELVETIUS removes statuette.*)

M. DE CHAUMONT. Ah sir, your country presents a divine spectacle to Europe.

FRANKLIN. Too free! Far too free!

MORELLET. Eh?

FRANKLIN. The spectators don't pay enough. 'Tis hard for an empty sack to stand upright.

MADAME HELVETIUS. Here's a cake! What does the man want?

FRANKLIN. I'd not be thankless, but a cake, dear Madame, is a poor substitute for food for starving armies. Is this all the aid I may expect from Paris for my people?

MADAME HELVETIUS (*taking plum*). Take it but as a symbol——

FRANKLIN. That I'll get both cake and credit too? How much?

MADAME HELVETIUS. Ah greedy! See how your name, writ large, covers the whole big cake—'Le digne Franklin.'

LEE (*bitterly*). Of course! His name obscures all others. Paris never remembers that Silas Deane and I are also commissioners.

MADAME HELVETIUS (*sweetly*). That's very true.

FRANKLIN. Tut! Tut! These folks have but

mis-spelled our names. 'Tis writ: The worthy Franklin, Le digne Franklin—a patent error! Spell it but correctly, it reads:

Lee—Deane—Franklin—three in one—(*Bows to LEE.*)

LEE. I know you would unite the powers of us all in you alone—but——

MADAME HELVETIUS. Bless the man!

LEE. But even if Paris had remembered me, they never would have writ: Lee—Deane—Franklin. No! They still would have put you first.

MADAME HELVETIUS. Indeed, you are right. See, Monsieur what they sell in the Palais Royal! (*Shows statuette of FRANKLIN.*) Behold his spectacles and smile.

MADAME DE CHAUMONT. Let me see—a veritable idol! And do you say your prayers to it, my dear?

FRANKLIN. She lets me do the kneeling.

LEE *makes a movement of disgust; the other men, smiling, turn toward dining-room.*

MADAME HELVETIUS. Come out soon, dear Doctor!

FRANKLIN. Soon as these wine-bibbers permit! (*He follows with LEE.*)

MADAME DE CHAUMONT (*to SALLY*). What a dear man, your uncle, Mademoiselle!

MADAME HELVETIUS. Wasted on England all these years!

MADAME DE CHAUMONT. Their fogs had no effect on him: he is *so* French.

MADAME HELVETIUS. Let us conspire in his behalf! They say—this is in confidence—the government is yielding. Dear Louis will give Franklin anything he asks for.

SALLY FRANKLIN. Ah, Madame, are *you* a ward of the king?

MADAME HELVETIUS (*taps her with fan*). Go to, you are saucy. Madame de Chaumont, let us leave this minx. Show me the walnuts and other curiosities from America. (*They two pass out. Left.*)

SALLY FRANKLIN *curls up in arm-chair before fire with statuette.*

*Song from dining-room.*

“Some faults have we all and so has my Joan,  
But then they’re exceedingly small,  
And now I’ve grown used to them, so like my own,  
I scarcely can see them at all, my dear friends,  
I scarcely can see ’em at all.”

BEAUMARCHAIS *enters hastily*; SALLY *rises eagerly.*

SALLY FRANKLIN. Your manners grow shocking, Monsieur; you’re very late.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*glancing from her to the cake and back again*). But I’m in time for the sweets.

SALLY FRANKLIN. There! Your dessert. (*She gives a tiny plum. They stand one on each side of table idly nibbling plums.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. Cruel! And ’twas her business kept me. You will be secret?

SALLY FRANKLIN (*nods*). Mum!



BEAUMARCHAIS. I come from Paris. Tonight the Count de Vergennes, Minister of War, will receive Franklin.

SALLY FRANKLIN. Tonight!!! O gemini! And that means——?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Recognition of America near—so near!

SALLY FRANKLIN. What can prevent now?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Nothing but a disaster to American arms. To be frank, Mademoiselle, France waits to see on which side her bread is buttered, but on the quiet would gladly thwart England.

SALLY FRANKLIN. Monsieur de Beaumarchais, should England learn that you, Hortalez and Company, represent France, would you not be in danger?

BEAUMARCHAIS. No—not I!

SALLY FRANKLIN. You mean?

BEAUMARCHAIS. I mean should England learn all France has given to America, she would force France to declare herself: Abandon America—surrender Franklin—or fight.

SALLY FRANKLIN. Surrender—Franklin?

BEAUMARCHAIS (*comfortingly*). We will not. Keep your mind fixed: To win, that is his métier. The wreath of failure would rest unsteadily upon his brow. To him belongs the comedy's crown of roses.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*courtesies low*). Success to the playwright!



BEAUMARCHAIS. You are cast for—intrigante.

SALLY FRANKLIN. Me?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Franklin is due at the Tuileries in fifty minutes; you must cause to vanish all these people. (*Nods toward dining-room.*)

SALLY FRANKLIN (*in dismay*). How?

BEAUMARCHAIS (*shrugs*). There's to be a play at court tonight; I'll present my box to Madame. Where is she? (*SALLY nods to left.*) You must say "Good-by" to the others. (*He goes off right.*)

SALLY *stands considering.* The SERVANT *enters.*

SERVANT. Mrs. Howe!

MRS. HOWE *enters.* SALLY *turns quickly and makes elaborate courtesy.*

SALLY FRANKLIN. Oh Madam, what honour!

MRS. HOWE (*in the act of returning the courtesy, pauses*). Madame—why, bless me, child, can it be——? (*Examines her.*) They've made a fine French baggage out of you! Rouge! Coiffure! Patches! *Abominable!*

SALLY FRANKLIN. Oh Madam, do you then not approve?

MRS. HOWE. My dear, do try to be as little French as may be. You see it can be done. No one would mistake me for a fine French hussy.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*murmurs*). No, Ma'am!

MRS. HOWE (*holding up chain SALLY is wearing*). And that chain! Too fine, child, for a spinster!

SALLY FRANKLIN. Yes, Ma'am. I've heard tell that only married women wear chains in England.

MRS. HOWE (*affectionately*). Sly minx! (*Pinches her cheek.*) Where's Franklin?

SALLY FRANKLIN (*regarding clock desperately*). He is engaged—I regret——

MRS. HOWE. Pshaw! He'll see me—come all the way from England. (*Burst of laughter from behind curtain.*) The Lord ha' mercy, child! What's this?

SALLY FRANKLIN. His fête. Observe the cake, sent by the pastry-cooks of Paris to celebrate seventy-two years of service.

MRS. HOWE. Bah! You can't make me believe Benjamin, as a baby, was serving his fellow-man.

SALLY FRANKLIN. He played with kites.

*Enter MADAME HELVETIUS, MADAME DE CHAUMONT and BEAUMARCHAIS.*

MADAME DE CHAUMONT. Ah, is this another friend to grace our fête?

MRS. HOWE. Our fête?

MADAME DE CHAUMONT. The fête of Dr. Franklin, in whose honor Paris is all lit up. But I see you are English.

MADAME HELVETIUS (*sweeping a low courtesy*). Yet he attracts the brilliant of all lands to do him reverence.

MRS. HOWE. He's flown his kite exceeding high to have attracted you.

MADAME HELVETIUS (*sweetly*). Nay, Madam, I have flown my kite at him.

MRS. HOWE (*under her breath*). Hussy!

FRANKLIN *and others enter from back.*

FRANKLIN (*hastening forward*). Mrs. Howe, what honor! We'll finish yet that longed-for game of chess, but I warn you, I play without a king. May I present Madame de Chaumont—and Monsieur, to whose generosity I owe this dwelling.

CHAUMONT. Dr. Franklin immortalizes my house by his mere residence.

FRANKLIN. You see, Madam, what flatterers here in Paris!

MRS. HOWE. Indeed we hear most scandalous tales of you, dear Doctor, and the society you keep.

FRANKLIN. Libels, Ma'am, libels! (*To BEAUMARCHAIS.*) Come, sir, explain your absence.

BEAUMARCHAIS. A thousand compliments, dear sir—could not come earlier! My excuses—most pressing business with his Majesty.

MADAME HELVETIUS. And one can see—felicitous?

BEAUMARCHAIS. You read me.

MADAME HELVETIUS (*with a corner of her eye on MRS. HOWE*). I may be indiscreet, but I dare swear from Beaumarchais' high spirits, the French alliance with America has even now been granted.

MRS. HOWE *looks dazed*. BEAUMARCHAIS *bows low in mockery*.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Madame Helvetius among the prophets!

MRS. HOWE. Is this true, Franklin?

FRANKLIN. Ah Ma'am were it so, I'd be struggling at this very minute to get into my court suit—which I don't possess—to make my bow to their majesties.

MADAME HELVETIUS (*teasingly*). Miss Franklin, perhaps you can account for his high spirits?

SALLY FRANKLIN. Look at the cake! We have separated the thirteen colonies from England. (*She lifts it to show the plums all gone.*)

MADAME HELVETIUS. Poor! Poor! Try again!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Ah Madame, it has been my happiness today to behold the world's two great philosophers embrace.

MADAME HELVETIUS. Voltaire and——?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Franklin——

MADAME HELVETIUS (*to FRANKLIN*). You are very shy: relate to us, Monsieur.

FRANKLIN. I leave the stage to Beaumarchais. (*He draws aside with MRS. HOWE.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS (*passing snuff to MORELLET and DE CHAUMONT*). Permit me! I play the rôle of Franklin. (*To MADAME HELVETIUS.*) You, Madame, be Voltaire: the rest, the crowd, who swarmed to see them. Time—noon, today! Place—a public theatre! They are introduced: they bow, Madame! (*Both bow low.*) The people cry: "Encore!" They warmly shake each other by the hand. (*He takes her hand.*)



MADAME CHAUMONT. And then?

BEAUMARCHAIS. The crowd goes mad, and in a mighty voice, cries: "Solon—Sophocles! Il faut s'embrasser à la Française." (BEAUMARCHAIS *leans forward*; MADAME HELVETIUS *draws back*.) Why, Madame, does Voltaire retreat?

MADAME HELVETIUS (*laughing*). In truth, Monsieur, because you are not really Franklin.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Cruel!

FRANKLIN (*advancing, to BEAUMARCHAIS*). Sly dog! (*To MADAME HELVETIUS*.) Here I am, Madame!

MADAME HELVETIUS. Ah, would that Helvetius, my beloved husband, had lived to assist you, Doctor!

FRANKLIN. He's very well as he is.

MADAME HELVETIUS. Ah?

FRANKLIN. I was in Hades the other night, the last time you refused me, and saw him, stretched at his ease with happiness writ large upon his face. He cried to me, "Sit down; my wife will bring choice viands."

I cried: "Your wife? But she is living!" Well, he blushed. I asked, "Are you disloyal to your wife who—despite all pleadings—stays so true to you?"

He muttered: "It's different in Hades."

Even as he spoke his heavenly wife, bearing ambrosia, entered. What was my horror, Sirs, and Madams, to recognize the late dear Mrs. Franklin.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*applauding*). Ingenious, by my faith!



FRANKLIN. I claimed my spouse; she answered me but coldly; "I was a good wife to you for forty-nine years, six months exactly—there upon earth: here I am *his*."

In my chagrin I woke. (*He turns to MADAME HELVETIUS impressively.*) Let us avenge ourselves!

MADAME DE CHAUMONT. Pray hide your blushes. Fie, Dr. Franklin, give us time to depart.

MRS. HOWE (*stiffly*). Dr. Franklin, I must go.

MADAME HELVETIUS. Which reminds me—we too must dress for court. (*To SALLY.*) Mademoiselle, there is to be a play by Molière; would you have the curiosity——?

SALLY FRANKLIN. Madame is kind—but—  
(*She looks uncertainly at MRS. HOWE.*)

MRS. HOWE. Don't wait for me, child; I must return to Paris.

MADAME HELVETIUS (*to SALLY*). In half an hour may I call? (*SALLY courtesies.*) Messieurs! Mesdames! (*She courtesies and goes with CHAUMONT, his wife, the ABBÉ MORELLET.*)

LEE broods darkly in the background. SALLY and BEAUMARCHAIS hover about trying to break up the conversation.

MRS. HOWE (*to FRANKLIN*). And so, Franklin, we meet again! How foreign this atmosphere to your taste! You, who used to delight in the well-bred society of London!

FRANKLIN. It is different. Here, the breeding shows more on the surface.

MRS. HOWE. Exactly! My dear friend, put no trust in these false perfidious French; they only seek their own advantage.

FRANKLIN (*smiling*). And England seeks our welfare?

MRS. HOWE. Love well, whip well! You're beaten. Your only hope lies in French recognition. France will not recognise you while you're beaten—a vicious circle! But England is generous. I am bid say, Take all you ever asked for—but return.

FRANKLIN. As colonies?

MRS. HOWE. How else?

FRANKLIN. This is the year of grace, 1778. We ask more than in '76. Then we *prayed* our *rights*; now we *ask independence*; two years hence we'll *demand* the Floridas—Canada—— Today is yesterday's pupil.

MRS. HOWE. Impudence! England offers more than in '76. She grants the justice of every claim and more—she'll make your leading people peers.

FRANKLIN. Behold the world will laugh at new-sets of home-made earls in Massachusetts.

MRS. HOWE. Benjamin Franklin, you would jest with the hang-man.

FRANKLIN. My dear Madam, Poverty, poetry and new titles of honour make men ridiculous.

MRS. HOWE. You would escape the ridicule of failure.

FRANKLIN. Is your opinion of your friend so mean?

MRS. HOWE. England esteems you, sir, so highly, she sends your friends as envoys to your person.

FRANKLIN. My vanity might be flattered did not your proposals show you entertain a mean opinion of me.

MRS. HOWE. I don't; but how about your other rebels—Washington, Jefferson? Perhaps they value what you scorn.

FRANKLIN. Washington! You think that Washington——!! (*He opens his mouth to pour forth his feelings, then decides it is not worth while, and lets his breath out again.*) Madame, come, a game of chess?

MRS. HOWE. Can you speak also for Mr. Lee? (*Looking toward him.*)

LEE (*stiffly*). Dr. Franklin spoke my sentiments, Ma'am.

FRANKLIN. You see, Ma'am, how we rebels hang together?

MRS. HOWE (*dryly*). I see.

FRANKLIN (*to SALLY*). My child, the chess board!

MRS. HOWE. Benjamin Franklin, do you insinuate I'm equal to chess, but not politics? (*She sits, annoyed, yet half smiling.*)

FRANKLIN. Ah, Madam, politics is a dirty game, but chess—this is a fête day.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*with determination*). Madam will you not ride with us to Paris? Madame Helvetius has a box——

MRS. HOWE. That woman! No! Run along, child!

SALLY brings chess-board reluctantly. She and BEAUMARCHAIS hover in background trying to break up game. He might set clock ahead, or quench the fire, or open window and let in draft, so that MRS. HOWE has repeatedly to pull up her wrap, etc., etc.

FRANKLIN. Chess is my weakness. Often my conscience says, "You're wasting time. For shame, with those gray hairs!" "Tut, Tut," I answer, "I know the soul will live forever, so why be a niggard with a little time?"

MRS. HOWE. What a justification for indolence!

FRANKLIN. So says LEE. (*With a glance toward him.*)

MRS. HOWE. Check! (FRANKLIN makes a move.) You can't do that and leave your king in danger.

FRANKLIN. I'll fight the battle *en républicain*. You'll see, the side without a king will win.

MRS. HOWE. We don't play without a king in England.

FRANKLIN. In America we do.

MRS. HOWE. Fighting for—what?

FRANKLIN. The pawns, Ma'am.

MRS. HOWE. I suppose that's what you call "democracy." You'll hang yet, sir.

SALLY (*desperately*). Madam, could you spare time to show me how to dress my hair à la mode anglaise?



MRS. HOWE. Some other time, child! Come to me in Paris. Monsieur Beaumarchais, show me to my coach. Franklin, I'll have another game with you if I have to cheat the hangman. (*She goes out with SALLY and BEAUMARCHAIS.*)

LEE *strides forward.*

LEE. Now have you time to 'tend to *business*?

FRANKLIN. Drat the man! I've been doing nothing else.

LEE. I bring news of the blackest; Bancroft's a traitor. All record of the aid France has given us, Bancroft has sold to the English.

FRANKLIN (*stares*). If such a man is not damned, it is not worth while to keep a devil.

LEE. There's no use swearing——

FRANKLIN. This will force the issue.

LEE. Hang it all, why not? It's time France did something beside skulk behind the fence. France must recognize us now a sovereign state—and fight with England or——

FRANKLIN. Abandon us.

LEE. Bah! Then threaten a return to England; France would not relish that.

FRANKLIN. Are you serious, Mr. Lee?

LEE. Well, it's a case of necessity.

FRANKLIN. Necessity never yet made a good bargain.

LEE. Damme, what's left to us? Affairs at



home are desperate, our armies humbled, British arms triumphant! Congress demanding gold——

FRANKLIN (*smiling*). We here, expected to do the miracle of loaves and fishes——

LEE. Exactly! So Dr. Franklin gives—dinner-parties.

FRANKLIN. Last, not least, American Commissioners in Paris—at odds! See you, sir, remember an old maxim: Always believe a friend is in the right, until proved wrong.

LEE. Your maxim *is* an old one. I've acted on it patiently two years—following where you've led to the accomplishment of—nothing.

FRANKLIN. Nothing?

LEE (*firmly*). Nothing!

FRANKLIN. Two years you say we've wasted; for two years I've been a beggar on my knees to France, shamelessly crying gold, and France has met our desperate need with—sir, you had our papers, tell me the sum France has given?

LEE (*sullenly*). Five million francs, but——

FRANKLIN. We've accomplished nothing. Though England has protested, France has winked at our selling prizes in her ports——

LEE. But——

FRANKLIN. We've accomplished nothing. France has thrown across the Atlantic, men, food, guns, powder. Why are the envoys both to Tuscany and Spain in Paris? These countries love us tenderly but prefer us—beyond their borders——

LEE. But you will not press the government of France for recognition.

FRANKLIN. France is the only friend we have in Europe, and, short of recognition, has granted all; and yet you say we have accomplished *nothing*.

LEE. I think you miss my point; I was not accusing France so much as——

FRANKLIN. Me? (*Shrugs.*) Well, I'm used to it.

LEE. The truth is—and I have writ it to th' congress—three commissioners in Paris are two too many.

FRANKLIN. Ah!

LEE. We work ill together; you have never trusted me.

FRANKLIN. Tut, man, you had charge of all our papers.

LEE. A despatch came recently; you did not show it.

FRANKLIN. I hoped I need never show it. (*Takes paper from pocket and hands to LEE*). Have it your own way, sir.

LEE (*reads, then looks up furiously*). Is this your work, Dr. Franklin?

FRANKLIN (*whimsically*). I did but also write to congress, that three commissioners were—too many. So—I resigned.

LEE (*dazedly*). You resigned?

FRANKLIN (*lightly*). But congress—has done me the honor to refuse my resignation.

LEE. So I'm packed off to Prussia; you, left here to reap where I have sown—— (*He turns to go.*)

FRANKLIN. Man, man, go not in anger——

SERVANT (*at door, announces*). Mr. Whately, of the English Embassy.

FRANKLIN and LEE *stare at one another.*

FRANKLIN. Whately! (*LEE continues his outward march; FRANKLIN places hand on his shoulder.*) Mr. Lee, I'm old and tired; I'll to bed. Will you receive him? (*LEE, half-mollified, turns.*) If he's come to make proposals of peace, be firm—but polite. Good-night, sir.

LEE *follows* SERVANT. FRANKLIN *lights candle and turns to go.* SALLY *runs in with wine-colored velvet coat.*

SALLY FRANKLIN. Here is your coat, and—wait a moment—I'll fetch your wig. (*She runs out leaving FRANKLIN staring at coat he holds helplessly; in a moment she returns with huge wig.*) I ordered one for you unbeknownst, in case—just in case—something should happen. (*If desired the wig-maker can be here introduced as is historically correct.*)

FRANKLIN. What has happened?

SALLY FRANKLIN. Try it on, dear. (*She tries to adjust it.*)

FRANKLIN (*mildly*). My dear, the wig is too small.

SALLY FRANKLIN (*vainly endeavoring to get it on*). I measured. No, no! It is not the wig which is too small; it is the head which is too big, dear. (*Kisses him.*) You'll have to go au naturel.

FRANKLIN. And where—if a question is permitted—am I to go?

SALLY FRANKLIN. Where—above all other places—do you wish to go?

FRANKLIN. To bed!

SALLY FRANKLIN. Oh fie! You are to go—to the Tuileries; Count Vergennes will receive you. (*She executes a war dance.*)

FRANKLIN (*thoughtfully*). The Tuileries?

BEAUMARCHAIS (*hastens in*). I've called a coach; it waits. Monsieur, tonight may seal the French alliance. I wish you—how do you say it?—luck.

FRANKLIN. Is it for that? (BEAUMARCHAIS *shrugs, not knowing.*) Or sir, is it known that France's generosity to us is betrayed to the English?

BEAUMARCHAIS (*whistles, then*). By Lee?

FRANKLIN. Lee's no traitor. Bancroft!

BEAUMARCHAIS. When?

FRANKLIN. Today.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*urging him*). To Paris! To Paris!

FRANKLIN. You'll go with me?

BEAUMARCHAIS. My horse is below: I'll catch you up.

FRANKLIN. If our despatches come, have 'em sent after. A victory now—— (*Goes.*)

SALLY FRANKLIN. Monsieur, go with him. Make France fight for America!



BEAUMARCHAIS. Fie, Mademoiselle, why are women such indomitable fighters?

SALLY FRANKLIN. We're not. We hate war—in general: but *this* war——

BEAUMARCHAIS (*laughs*). On every warrior's heart since Cain slew Abel are graven these words: *MY* war was pure and holy.

SALLY FRANKLIN. But you enlisted——

BEAUMARCHAIS. Selfishly—in the pursuit of—happiness.

SALLY FRANKLIN. Monsieur, you amaze and shock me.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Mademoiselle, examine all conditions from the grave ambassador with his cypher, to the comic author with his scribble, from the ingenious minister who invents a new tax to the obscure purloiner who also dives into the pockets, where is anything done which is not for the profit of the well-beloved receipts?

SALLY FRANKLIN. And you have received—nothing——

BEAUMARCHAIS. As yet—— Mademoiselle, I can write love affairs so much better than I can make them.

SALLY FRANKLIN. Monsieur, it's—lucky for your plays.

*Enter LEE and WHATELY.*

LEE. Where's Franklin? In bed yet?

WHATELY. Gad, Miss Franklin! (*Slowly appraising her.*) Is this Miss Franklin? Faith, my



dear, you should thank us for getting ye sent to Paris; it did ye service. (SALLY *courtesies low.*) I won't wait for Franklin. Ye can tell him the good news when he wakes in the morning. Your servant! (*He bows and goes.*)

LEE. Where's Franklin?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Gone to Paris.

LEE. To Paris? The old liar! Had he heard the news?

BEAUMARCHAIS. What news?

SALLY. Has the courier come? (*They speak simultaneously.*)

LEE. This is the end—my God! And Franklin as usual neglecting his country's interests.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*impatiently*). What is the end?

LEE. News from Paris—a mighty British victory in America.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*contemptuously*). Such news usually comes from Paris—made up in the British embassy. Why was Whately here?

LEE. Tried to pump me—to see if we knew more——

BEAUMARCHAIS. You told him——

LEE. Sir, I told him nothing—I knew nothing, Franklin tells me nothing—I told him our courier was over-due.

BEAUMARCHAIS. What road?

LEE. The road from Havre—by way of Rouen.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Whately's half-way there by now! He'll get your despatches, man.

LEE. By gad—*that's* what Whately came for!

SALLY FRANKLIN. Steal 'em?

BEAUMARCHAIS. I'll ride to meet your courier.

LEE. Not the first they've stole, by a long shot!

BEAUMARCHAIS (*grimly*). He shall stand and deliver. (*Rounds on Sally*). If I succeed——

SALLY FRANKLIN (*holding out her arms*). If you succeed—or fail. (*He catches her in an embrace.*) Go—go!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Whately can't beat me; I have the strength of all the lovers since Troy-town. I'll get those despatches and catch up with Franklin at the Tuileries. (*Struggles into cloak.*)

LEE. Franklin—at the Tuileries!

SALLY FRANKLIN. Why does not Mr. Lee ride for the despatches?

LEE (*with great excitement*). Good gad, ma'am, Franklin at the Tuileries—without me! I'm an American envoy—not a highwayman; I must join Franklin at the Tuileries. (*Goes.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS (*snatches a kiss*). Oh, we'll all join Franklin at the Tuileries! (*Goes hastily.*)

CURTAIN.

## ACT V

*A small panelled room in the Palace of the Tuileries, opening by large doors at the back into the Grande Salle. In the embrasures at each side of the large door are stained-glass windows, set in Gothic frames and emblazoned with the arms of France. The room is lighted by candles set high in sconces.*

*A small, exquisite cabinet desk is at the left, at which* COUNT VERGENNES, *Minister of War, is seated, facing* LORD STOREMONT, *who is squarely placed in a chair with his back to the door. There is a small side door to the right.*

STOREMONT (*thumping table*). Count Vergennes, ye must face th' issue squarely; ye must stop this illicit aid to th' colonies.

VERGENNES (*raising eyebrows*). Must — my lord?

STOREMONT. Damme, sir, I'm a plain unvarnished man, can't say one thing and mean another. Is France at war with us or is she not?

VERGENNES. Sir——

STOREMONT. For two years France has secretly fostered this rebellion in America——

VERGENNES. You have no proof.

STOREMONT (*triumphantly*). Aye, but I have, Count Vergennes, I have proofs. I've waited for 'em and I've got 'em.

VERGENNES. Lord Storemont, I've asked Dr. Franklin to come here. We will talk over the affair man to man——

STOREMONT (*slightly taken aback*). Damme, sir—between you and me—Franklin's a match for both of us—man to man; but, my lord, country to country, England's a match for a dozen of ye.

VERGENNES. We shall see. (*Touches bell. SECRETARY enters by small door.*) Go, see if Dr. Franklin waits. (*SECRETARY goes.*)

STOREMONT. Two years since I protested against Benjamin Franklin's coming here; it was a smack in the face of England's pride. Franklin came. For two years I have come, remonstrated, gone and come again; France has greeted us politely, given us soft words—and winked at Dr. Franklin.

VERGENNES. O monsieur, say rather—laughed at him!

SECRETARY *ushers in* FRANKLIN.

STOREMONT. Damme, she's laughed at us.

VERGENNES (*going forward eagerly*). Dr. Franklin, it gives me great pleasure to meet a man renowned all over Europe, a man who casts such lustre on the name of England.

FRANKLIN. You do me too much honour; but, my lord, I am American. The English do not claim me, eh, Lord Storemont?

STOREMONT (*smiles, unable to resist*). Indeed they do; they *demand* you; the gallows waits.

FRANKLIN (*smiling whimsically*). England offers peerages with one hand and halters with t'other.

VERGENNES. Two worlds claim Dr. Franklin. (*More seriously.*) Sir, we are at a turning of the ways. America must convince the world she is a state able to stand alone—or——



FRANKLIN. He who would rise at court must begin by creeping.

STOREMONT. Ye've crept long enough. If ye can scrap—ye can fight alone; or, by heaven, let France play fair, come out into the open! England'll fight both of ye—and lick ye.

VERGENNES (*significantly*). Dr. Franklin—if *we* fight—*do we win?* A word, man! Say you're winning—I'll take it as gospel. (*Leans forward eagerly.*)

STOREMONT. Ay, Dr. Franklin, say you're winning; I dare ye!

FRANKLIN. My lord—we are losing—as a child not yet full-grown against his grand-dam; but with every licking our powers grow. America—my lord—is a lusty infant.

STOREMONT. A half-truth! Ye are losing and ye'll lose. The question is: Will France recognise you and share your failure?

FRANKLIN. We will not fail, if France grant recognition.

STOREMONT. Will France's king dare aid a rebel?

FRANKLIN. Pardon—this day's rebel is tomorrow's freeman—and alas!—next week's autocrat.

STOREMONT (*to VERGENNES*). If they succeed, what king may rest secure?

FRANKLIN. Only the *good* kings! We had not separated had our king been such.

STOREMONT. Mr. Franklin, I was not addressing *you*—and you have not separated—*yet*.



FRANKLIN. Not yet—but as the cream, gathering from the milk its richness, virtue, is separate. The cream's atop; France has but to skim it.

VERGENNES. For whose use?

FRANKLIN. Yours and ours! Our commerce was once the jealous property of England; once free, we trade with all the world.

VERGENNES. But France? Would she receive especial favor?

FRANKLIN. In the past 'twas our pride to ape England; now we go threadbare; in the future our ruffles shall be French and our silk stockings—worn à la Française.

STOREMONT (*bursting with indignation*). Gentlemen, you forget *I* am present.

FRANKLIN. No, my lord, we are simply playing fair. You bring your goods to market; I bring ours; his lordship weighs our value.

SECRETARY (*announces*). Mr. Whately, my lord, of the British Embassy!

FRANKLIN. Ah, more goods for market!

VERGENNES. Admit him.

WHATELY *enters; he is slightly dishevelled and hurried.*

STOREMONT. Your news, man!

WHATELY. My lord, I was coming hither with despatches; I was set upon and robbed; I had barely ascertained that there had been a mighty victory in America. (*He slides a paper into STOREMONT'S hand.*)

FRANKLIN. I knew it; we have won!

WHATELY (*staring.*) You?

FRANKLIN. You said—a mighty victory.

WHATELY. Not for *you!* A mighty *British* victory!

FRANKLIN (*smiling*). No, no, no, no, no! An American victory!

WHATELY. Sir, would I, an Englishman, name aught “victory,” did I not mean for England?

FRANKLIN (*quick as lightning*). But, sir, you were quoting *American* despatches. Your news all comes from America by way of England; ours comes direct. How could you know unless you had possessed yourself of American despatches?

WHATELY (*defiantly*). They *were* American despatches but——

STOREMONT (*sliding the paper WHATELY had given him into his pocket*). But the victory is British. Gentlemen, General Howe has taken Philadelphia.

VERGENNES. Dr. Franklin, did you know of this? Is this true?

FRANKLIN. No, my lord, I do not think it true; I think it is only a—Story-mont. (*He smiles at Storemont.*)

STOREMONT (*bewildered*). Eh?

FRANKLIN (*to WHATELY*). Where are those despatches?

WHATELY. Sir, as I told you I was set upon and robbed——

BEAUMARCHAIS. By me! (*He enters on words, followed by another man bearing signs of hard riding and fighting.*)

FRANKLIN (*turning to him*). Sir, is this true? Is Philadelphia taken?

BEAUMARCHAIS (*with dancing eyes*). Sir, it is true. Howe has taken Philadelphia.

FRANKLIN (*trying to make the best of a bad job*). If it be true—why Philadelphia is a pleasure-loving city—and Howe a pleasure-loving general. You will find that Philadelphia has taken Howe.

STOREMONT. Chut! Acknowledge yourself beaten.

FRANKLIN. Beaten? (*To BEAUMARCHAIS.*) Is Washington dead—or prisoner?

BEAUMARCHAIS. No——

STOREMONT. But——  
(*They speak almost together.*)

FRANKLIN. Are our other armies destroyed?

BEAUMARCHAIS. No——

STOREMONT. But——  
(*They speak almost simultaneously.*)

FRANKLIN. Has every freeman in America laid down his arms and made submission?

BEAUMARCHAIS. No——

STOREMONT. But soon will.  
(*They speak with one voice.*)

Look you, Count Vergennes, from Canada, on the north, one mighty British army under Burgoyne, is descending; from New York, on the south, Henry

Clinton with another mighty British army is mounting, and there between at—er——

BEAUMARCHAIS. Saratoga. (FRANKLIN *looks keenly at him.*)

STOREMONT. Saratoga—lies the last forlorn hope of America. We've ousted their envoys from every court in Europe; in America we have 'em out-manoeuvred and out-generaled. Can you still see a chance for their success?

VERGENNES. Yes—when I look on Dr. Franklin. (*All turn to FRANKLIN: his face is alight.*)

FRANKLIN. Mr. Rutledge, your tidings! Out with it, man!

RUTLEDGE (*comes forward from behind BEAUMARCHAIS*). Dr. Franklin, gentlemen, I am commissioned by the Continental Congress to bear tidings: At Saratoga—Burgoyne, commanding—the mightiest British army in America, has surrendered . . . out-generaled and out-manoeuvred!

FRANKLIN (*softly*). Ah, this is no Story-mont! (*Turns to VERGENNES.*) Sir, what French generosity has helped to win, French wisdom will confirm? It has ever been my mind a virgin state should be in readiness, but wait proposals. America, my lord, is a fair virgin.

STOREMONT. A minute ago she was a baby. Bah! For two years France has supported America as a mistress.

FRANKLIN. But the time's arrived to come forth boldly and claim alliance.

VERGENNES. I go to consult his Majesty, but Dr. Franklin—(*takes his hand*)—I have no doubt——



FRANKLIN. As we have tottered to our feet——

VERGENNES. As to the issue! Gentlemen! (*He bows and withdraws.*)

STOREMONT (*to SECRETARY*). Sir, send my passports to the British Embassy. (*Turning to FRANKLIN.*) After all, if England's armies have surrendered, it's to England's sons—thank God—and not to Frenchies!

RUTLEDGE. England is late in naming Americans "sons."

STOREMONT (*glaring at RUTLEDGE*). Dr. Franklin, as an *American*, I wish you hanged; personally, Godspeed! (*He goes with WHATELY.*)

FRANKLIN (*turning to BEAUMARCHAIS*). Sir, I fear to overload gratitude, lest she kick.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Don't thank me, Doctor Franklin, congratulate me.

FRANKLIN'S *face lights with understanding as he takes his hand. The doors at the back are thrown open, showing a portion of the Grande Salle in the rear. MADAME HELVETIUS enters followed by MADAME DE CHAUMONT, SALLY FRANKLIN, CHAUMONT, MORELLET and others.*)

MADAME HELVETIUS. Dr. Franklin, behold in me a prophet! You have risen up and your enemies are scattered.

FRANKLIN. My enemies? Rather my country's enemies! I have enemies as an American—as an envoy—but I thank God there are not any in the whole wide world who are my enemies as a man.

MADAME HELVETIUS. Sir, in the name of all French ladies, I salute *The Friend of Man*. (*She kisses him on both cheeks.*)



MADAME DE CHAUMONT. I salute the diplomat, who produces a victory just when he needs one. (*She courtesies low.*)

FRANKLIN. Ah, Madame, that was not diplomacy; that was luck.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I salute the diplomat who forced the British minister to acknowledge himself beaten.

FRANKLIN. That was not diplomacy—for he did not acknowledge it.

MADAME HELVETIUS. The queen will receive you; come, monsieur.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*throwing up his hands*). A presentation—and no court suit!

FRANKLIN (*quickly*). That is diplomacy.

LEE *enters, magnificently attired.*

MADAME HELVETIUS. La, there comes Mr. Lee! (*Beckons him.*) Monsieur, écoute! I've added one more verse in Franklin's honor. (*She sings.*)

“Now America regains  
Liberty, and breaks her chains;  
And this great work of our age,  
A fresh exploit of our sage,  
Has finished been  
By Louis and Benjamin.”

*She removes the wreath of roses from her hair and tries to crown FRANKLIN; he ducks.*

THE END



## COMING DOWN THE MOUNT

“How many observe Christ’s birthday,  
how few his precepts! Oh, it is easier to  
keep holidays than commandments!”

B. FRANKLIN.

*To*  
MARTIN FISCHER  
*“Thinker!”*

## THE CHARACTERS

JESUS does not appear in this play, but if his presence is not felt, up on the mountain, behind the gate of the temple, on the hill of Golgotha, the play is a failure.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA.

A YOUNG MAN.

THREE OTHER PHARISEES OF JERUSALEM.

MARY OF MAGDALA.

SALOME.

CAIAPHAS, HIGH PRIEST OF ISRAEL.

ANNAS, HIS FATHER-IN-LAW.

NATHANAEL, ANOTHER PRIEST.

PONTIUS PILATE, GOVERNOR OF JERUSALEM.

HIS PAGES.

HIS SOLDIERS.

HIS WIFE.

THE BLIND MAN.

THE PEOPLE.

The people may, in their time, play many parts. Thus, the people who stream down the mount in ACT I, may represent those who go up for healing in ACT II, the mob which shouts "Crucify him!" in ACT III, and the ordinary citizen of Jerusalem in ACT IV.



ACT I	ACT II	ACT III	ACT IV
A fisherman.....	Old man (Group I)	The mob.	Citizens
His wife, Susannah.	Mother of Blind Child.....		Servant
Another fisherman..	Money changer.....		Peter
A Third fisherman..	Money changer.....		John
A small boy.....	Blind child.....		
Another small boy..	(Group I).....		
A shepherd.....	Fruit vender.....		
Another shepherd..	Wine vender.....		
A rich merchant....	Dove seller.....		
A poor woman.....	Mother.....		
Her child.....	Child Afflicted by devils.....		
Man-who-swears... (Group I).....			
His wife..... (Group I).....			
Johnny.....			Child
Sarah.....			
Zacharias.....			
Peter.....			
A lad.....	Lame boy.....		
Another lad.....	His comrade.....		

ACT I. THE MOUNTAIN SIDE, ON THE SHORE OF GALILEE.

ACT II. THE STAIRS, LEADING UP TO THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.

ACT III. THE HALL OF PILATE'S DWELLING. THE MORNING BEFORE THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER, AND THE SAME ABOUT THE NINTH HOUR.

ACT IV. A STREET IN JERUSALEM BEFORE THE HOUSE OF CAIAPHAS. THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, EARLY MORNING.

*(Where brackets are used about the closing words of a sentence, this is to indicate that at this point the following speaker interrupts, though the original speaker continues to the end.)*

# COMING DOWN THE MOUNT

## ACT I

*The people are descending the hill after listening to the Sermon on the Mount. They enter from the heights on the left, descend a few steps and cross to the extreme right, descend again, and, advancing toward the center, take the last few steps to rock level. From thence, they pass out to the right. The dun-colored, rocky slope is backed by a noon-time sky of brilliant blue.*

*Enter JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA and a YOUNG MAN in deep converse.*

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Truly, this man Jesus speaketh as one with authority, and not as the scribes.

YOUNG MAN. His daring is great. He trampleth the law of Moses.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. There were priests present; did'st note them? Ay, and well-known Pharisees of Jerusalem—biting their thin lips!

YOUNG MAN. Mark my words, the sermon of Jesus on the mount yonder, will mean his death. Prophets have been stoned for less.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. His words yonder will mean his eternal life. Those words will never die.

YOUNG MAN. Look you, he is a dreamer. On the

earth today, his dream-world wars with the world of Caesar; it cannot be. If it could be—this earth were heaven.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. He is no dreamer: he is a seer of realities, a lover of God and man.

YOUNG MAN. Love—for God and man? Nay! God is too far off, and man too near.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Not for him!

YOUNG MAN. Sit yonder, my friend, and note the people. See how little of heaven is in them. If there be ten people among these thousands, who understand his teachings, or are moved to follow, I will acknowledge myself wrong. If ten? Nay, if five! If one!

*They sit on one side of the slope and observe the people. Two small BOYS run in playing, followed by three FISHERMEN and SUSANNAH.*

FIRST FISHERMAN. Truly a mar-velous discourse of the master's! It passeth my understanding how anyone can listen to such a sermon and still—(*With a side glance at his wife, SUSANNAH.*)—be selfish!

SUSANNAH (*unmoved*). Or—self-righteous!

FIRST LITTLE BOY (*to* SECOND LITTLE BOY). Feel my muscle! Gee, I could lick thee easy!

SECOND LITTLE BOY (*to* FIRST LITTLE BOY). Thou could'st not! I can lick all the boys in our village.

FIRST FISHERMAN. Tut! Tut! Thou heardest the master? Blessed be the meek!

SECOND LITTLE BOY. I won't be meek! I won't! I won't! I *won't!* I hate meekness.

FIRST LITTLE BOY (*casually*). Meekness is for cowards.

FISHERMEN. Oh! Oh!

FIRST FISHERMAN. Is he—the master—a coward?

FIRST LITTLE BOY. N—no-o! But I would be, if I didn't lick the boys when they attacked me.

Come, Pete, I'll race thee. (*The BOYS run off.*)

FIRST FISHERMAN (*laughing gently*). The little beggar's right. Boys will never be manly until they learn to use their fists.

SECOND AND THIRD FISHERMEN. Ay, ay, the child's right.

FIRST FISHERMAN'S WIFE (SUSANNAH). To be "manly"—being the master's ideal?

FIRST FISHERMAN. Be silent, woman!

SECOND FISHERMAN. Still, it was a wonderful sermon. Did'st mark what he said about the Pharisees?

THIRD FISHERMAN. Ha, ha! They caught it, surely! The way they give alms to be seen of men!

SECOND FISHERMAN. Ay, and pray standing in the market-place!

THIRD FISHERMAN. Hypocrites that they are, they shall surely perish.

SUSANNAH. Are *you* their judge? If my ears did not deceive me, the master said, Judge not!

THIRD FISHERMAN. Woman, thou art a fool!

SUSANNAH. Thou—thou callest me "fool"? And thou—what art thou . . . ?



FIRST FISHERMAN. Peace, woman!

SUSANNAH. Hark now to him! He would fain be peacemaker! But peacemakers don't inherit the earth, you know; they only get called names. (*She hits him.*) Or cast into prison—(*Hits him.*)—or get persecuted for righteousness' sake. (*She hits him a third time.*) Now—turn the other cheek—if you dare!

FIRST FISHERMAN, *holding his hands to his cheeks, hastens out.*

SECOND AND THIRD FISHERMEN. Ha, ha, ha!

SECOND FISHERMAN. But you know—all that about turning the other cheek was stark lunacy.

THIRD FISHERMAN. Ay! It's not in nature. The man's mad.

SECOND FISHERMAN. No self-respecting person would turn the other cheek.

THIRD FISHERMAN. I quite agree.

SUSANNAH. It was a good sermon, eh, my masters?—but not quite—er—practicable.

SECOND FISHERMAN. Yea, yea, a good sermon!

THIRD FISHERMAN (*speaking simultaneously with SECOND FISHERMAN*). Quite a good sermon!

*They pass out.*

*Enter TWO SHEPHERDS, a RICH MERCHANT and a POOR WOMAN and her CHILDREN.*

FIRST SHEPHERD. What I liked best of the whole talk was the way he give it to the Pharisees.

SECOND SHEPHERD. One of them was there. Did



ye see his face? I had to chuckle when the master said, men should not give as the hypocrites do, to be seen of men.

FIRST SHEPHERD. He knew whom the master meant, all right, all right.

MERCHANT (*nodding fatly*). Ay, ay! I've always maintained, when ye give alms, ye should do it in secret—[not to be seen of men.]

POOR WOMAN. But not in secrecy like thine!

MERCHANT (*turning on her*). Eh?

POOR WOMAN. No one hath ever seen *thee* give a penny.

MERCHANT (*surveying her with a scathing glance, turns to the shepherds*). Look you, my friends, is this not the woman who, a short time since, stole bread from the baker?

POOR WOMAN. For my little ones!

And who art thou to condemn me—thou that lendest on *usury*! The master said, "Give unto him that asketh!"

MERCHANT. A dangerous doctrine! Possible only [to one who had no possessions!]

POOR WOMAN. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth!"

MERCHANT. My children then would starve, [even as yours.]

POOR WOMAN. And "Take no thought for the morrow!"

FIRST SHEPHERD. Fancy a world doing that! No thought for the morrow! No catching of fish! No

baking of bread! No patching of old clothes! No fashioning new!

SECOND SHEPHERD. If manna fell!

FIRST SHEPHERD. If manna fell! And if our clothes waxed not old—as in Moses' day!

MERCHANT. This man is a dreamer. He should have lived in the days when God was nearer to his people.

POOR WOMAN. Maybe—he seeks to lead his people—nearer to God.

MERCHANT. Humph! (*He passes out.*)

FIRST SHEPHERD (*following*). But it was a clever sermon just the same. It did me good to hear him scorn the Pharisees; they are *so* self-righteous.

*All pass out.*

*Enter the MAN-WHO-SWEARS followed by his WIFE.*

MAN-WHO-SWEARS. I liked most of the sermon, but what he said about swearing gets me. I never thought swearing was so evil. I can't help thinking he was a *leetle* hard on those who swear.

HIS WIFE. You think all of your habits are all right because they're yours, but I can tell you he was just as hard on swearers as on murderers, and if you don't watch out . . .

MAN-WHO-SWEARS (*soothingly*). There—there!

HIS WIFE (*angrily*). Oh it's always "There! There!" with you. I'm about tired of your constant swearing. It's a nasty habit and the master was quite right to condemn it.

MAN-WHO-SWEARS (*drawling*). Don't be so angry . . .

HIS WIFE. Angry? You're enough to [make anybody . . .]

MAN-WHO-SWEARS (*grinning*). "For whoso is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment."

HIS WIFE. "*Without a cause,*" the master said, "without a cause!"

MAN-WHO-SWEARS. I didn't hear him say "without a cause."

HIS WIFE. Well, he said it, and you're sufficient cause, goodness knows! (*She flounces out.*)

MAN-WHO-SWEARS (*following*). Well, anyway, I'm not a hypocrite—like the Pharisees.

*Enter a small boy, JOHNNY, crying. He is followed by SARAH, ZACHARIAS, and PETER.*

SARAH (*calls to him*). Wait, Johnny, wait!

ZACHARIAS (*busy whittling a stick, taunts*). Go home, cry-baby! Cry-baby!

JOHNNY (*turning indignantly*). I ain't a cry-baby, an' I ain't a bully.

PETER (*grinning*). That's one for you, master Zacharias.

JOHNNY (*nursing his grievance*). I was just walk-in' along, an' he came and punched me, he punched me in the eye and made it water.

ZACHARIAS. Run along home to mother and tell her *all* about it.

JOHNNY (*with manly dignity*). I ain't a tell-tale.

SARAH. Of course he isn't. (*To ZACHARIAS.*) Aren't you ashamed to tease him. (*She runs forward and puts her arms about JOHNNY.*) Zach's sorry he hit you, dearest, aren't you, Zach?

ZACHARIAS. No, I ain't!

JOHNNY. No, he ain't!

(*They speak simultaneously.*)

SARAH (*hopefully*). Well—he will be sorry.

ZACHARIAS (*taking a determined stand*). Now, look here! I know your game. You're trying to be peace-maker, and I won't stand for it.

JOHNNY. We don't want any goody-goodies at our house.

ZACHARIAS. When we want to fight, Johnny and me'll fight all we want to, won't we, Johnny?

JOHNNY. You bet we will!

ZACHARIAS (*to JOHNNY*). Come along with me and I'll show you a bird's nest.

ZACHARIAS, JOHNNY and PETER start off together. ZACHARIAS casts a cautious glance behind to see if SARAH is observing them, but she has her head crooked in her arm, weeping.

ZACHARIAS (*in a low voice to JOHNNY*). I didn't really hurt you, did I?

JOHNNY (*manfully*). Of course not! I was just fooling.

ZACHARIAS. You run along; I'll follow in a minute.



JOHNNY *and* PETER *pass out*. ZACHARIAS *goes back to* SARAH.

ZACHARIAS. Come along, Sarah. You can play "peace-makers" if you like, but I reckon you'll have to play it alone. Johnny and me, we *like* scraps.

SARAH *smiles a trifle tearfully and they go off together*.

*Enter* MARY OF MAGDALA *and* SALOME.

MARY OF MAGDALA. Sawest thou, Salome, the angels, like a cloud about him? And devils arose out of the earth—a black swarm. And they fought . . .

SALOME. I saw naught; only I heard his words. These are the angels of thy imagining, but the devils? They are in thy heart, Mary—Mary . . .

MARY OF MAGDALA (*dreamily*). The devils are in all our hearts. I heard not his words; I saw only the devils fighting—and the angels. And the devils prevailed; yea, they carried him away to the bottomless pit. . . . (*Her voice sinks with horror.*)

SALOME. Mary of Magdala, come thou to the master! He will heal thee. He will cast out the devils that afflict.

MARY OF MAGDALA (*shaking her head and smiling*). There's one little devil that laughs and one that cries, and one which chills me with fear, and one which makes me mad with mirth—but the devils twain it is which whisper in my ear, How oft hast thou sought healing? Oft and oft again? Thou hast sought healing all in vain—in vain!

SALOME (*placing a hand on her shoulder*). Not in vain! Turn, Mary!



MARY OF MAGDALA *turns, gives SALOME a long steady look; then, with the gesture of one who brushes away a cloud of poisonous gnats, she turns and ascends the mountain. SALOME follows.*

*Enter two PHARISEES.*

FIRST PHARISEE (*violently*). Cattle! Sheep!

SECOND PHARISEE. For the moment they follow! They see his miracles; they are fed; they are healed. What do they understand?

FIRST PHARISEE. Nothing!

SECOND PHARISEE. Take this sermon. What does he praise? Humility! Renunciation! What does he condemn? Property! War! Violence, which is the way man acquires and retains property.

FIRST PHARISEE (*simply*). Why, God gave property when he said, Spoil the Egyptians!

SECOND PHARISEE (*impatiently*). Oh cease these old wives' tales! God gave property when he put the acquisitive instinct in man. Hath not Mother Eve always craved the fruit of another's tree?

FIRST PHARISEE. Old wives' tales? . . . Humph!

SECOND PHARISEE (*promptly*). Truest tale ever told! Man's desire to possess is ingrain . . .

FIRST PHARISEE. And leads—*out* of Paradise!

SECOND PHARISEE. Chut! Man's paradise is possession; his hell, poverty. The teaching of Jesus threatens our appetites. Now Moses' law took into account man's passions, but this man goeth counter to the law of Moses

FIRST PHARISEE. If the people knew it—they would stone him with many stones.

SECOND PHARISEE. If the people knew? . . . The people shall know! Passover week, when all flock to Jerusalem. . . . (*They eye one another intelligently.*) Until then, gather ye his words; they shall be stones to stone him. (*They pass out.*)

(*Enter two LADS.*)

FIRST LAD. I'd like to follow the master, but my mother won't let me.

SECOND LAD. Run away. She'd forgive you.

FIRST LAD. No, she wouldn't. And how can you be reconciled with another, if the other won't be reconciled with you? (*Sighs.*) It's very difficult.

SECOND LAD (*peering downward*). There come some people back. I did not know the master would speak again.

*The people who had gone down the mountain are returning. Enter the FISHERMEN, the MERCHANT, the MAN-WHO-SWEARS, the SHEPHERDS.*

FIRST FISHERMAN (*instead of ascending, turns to the left*). Hark'ee, my friends, I'm going home. Seems strangely as though we sat under a spell, there on the mountain-side, and saw things not as they are, for in this world it is the proud and haughty who go first. . . .

MAN-WHO-SWEARS. And cursed are the peace-makers!

SECOND FISHERMAN. To me it seems only good sense to hate your enemy.

MERCHANT. Just think of it! To give to him who asks! 'Twould beggar all.

THIRD FISHERMAN. To turn the other cheek is want of wit; to love your enemy—merest pretence!

FIRST LAD (*surveys them, then deliberately calls*). Swine!

ALL (*turning their faces up to him*). Eh?

FIRST LAD. I say the master's teachings are divine, but he hath cast his pearls among you swine!

MAN-WHO-SWEARS. Swine? Swine, say you? (*He lurches at the lad.*)

ALL SHOUT (*confusedly*). Cast him down! Cast him down! A pretty follower of the master, he! Cast him out! Cast him over the mountain! (*All advance on him. His comrade springs to his defence, and all go swaying and jostling down the mountain.*)

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA *and the YOUNG MAN rise and advance.*

YOUNG MAN. You see?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. I see. We are of earth; he is of heaven——

YOUNG MAN. What shall bridge the gulf? Tell me, Joseph of Arimathaea, how may a man of earth win salvation? I would be saved—saved——

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Ask him.

YOUNG MAN. I have ever kept the law of Moses: Love God; do violence to no man, neither be false accuser. . . .

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Yet *he* saith, Thou shalt love God with thy whole heart and soul and strength . . . and thy neighbour as thyself.

YOUNG MAN. And dost thou so?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. I do not! Who doth?

*There is silence for a few seconds; then both, as though moved by a common impulse, look up the hillside and say, The Master!*

*From the hilltop comes a distant cry of Hosanna!! which is re-echoed from below. Those who had disappeared struggling, now reappear, waving branches and shouting, Hosanna! Hosanna to the son of David!*

## ACT II

*The ascent to the temple of Jerusalem.*

*The flight of steps leading up to the temple of Jerusalem ends in an arched door, before which hangs a heavily embroidered curtain. Halfway up the steps is a landing, on the right side of which sits the BLIND MAN with his bowl. At the base of the steps, across the front, rise pillars, forming a sort of shady cloister. The pilgrims, seeking healing, enter from the right, between the cloister and the steps, and mount the steps toward the temple. The steps are in brilliant sunshine.*

*Three PHARISEES are standing in deep converse on the left side of the cloister.*

*From within the temple comes a cry of many voices, heard faintly. Hosanna! Hosanna to the son of David!*

*The curtain to the temple door swings aside, and the YOUNG MAN appears. He descends the steps heavily, and with downcast head. The PHARISEES turn and observe him with curious intentness.*



SECOND PHARISEE. Hath *he* been up to be healed? Not so sorrowfully do men come down who have been up for healing, but leaping and praising God, as though, indeed, they were well.

THIRD PHARISEE. Are they not then healed?

SECOND PHARISEE. Are they? (*They eye one another.*)

FIRST PHARISEE. As for *me*, I have examined his system by which he heals, and I can find nothing in it, nothing!

*As the YOUNG MAN approaches them, the THIRD PHARISEE takes a step toward him.*

THIRD PHARISEE. Young man, attend! Hath the prophet of Nazareth no healing for thee? (*The YOUNG MAN makes a gesture of impatience and would pass on, but the THIRD PHARISEE places a restraining hand upon his shoulder.*) If yon Galilean hath failed thee, hath not Israel priests?

YOUNG MAN. In Israel's priesthood, is there salvation? I would be saved—saved! I went up. I asked the master whence cometh salvation. He said . . .

THIRD PHARISEE. He said . . . ?

YOUNG MAN. He said, Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not steal, Honor thy father and mother. I said, Master, all these things have I observed from my youth up. He said . . .

FIRST PHARISEE (*nodding approvingly*). Excellent young man!

SECOND PHARISEE (*coming closer*). Well? Well?

YOUNG MAN (*raises his head and stares at him with a slight hostility*). What is it to thee?



SECOND PHARISEE (*paternally*). We would serve thee.

YOUNG MAN. He said, One thing thou lackest yet: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor,—and come, follow me.

*There is a pause. The THIRD PHARISEE regards him curiously.*

THIRD PHARISEE. And thou goest now to sell—and give?

YOUNG MAN (*wrenching his arm violently away*). Let me go! Let me go! (*He passes hastily out to the right.*)

*The PHARISEES eye one another with apprehension.*

*The cries of the VENDERS are heard approaching.*

WINE VENDER (*without*). Honey of wine! Honey [of wine!]

FRUIT VENDER (*without*). Pomegranates! Figs! Figs from Damascus! Dates of Samarcand!

SECOND PHARISEE. I tell thee, this man and society cannot exist together.

THIRD PHARISEE. Tut! Men go up gladly for healing, but they put far away from them his teaching. Yea, from his teaching they turn away sorrowful, they that have great possessions.

*The voices of the PILGRIMS are heard without.*

ONE PILGRIM (*calls*). This way! He is in the temple court yonder, healing.

FIRST PHARISEE (*to other PHARISEES*). Come,

let us seek out the priests, Annas, and Caiaphas, and accuse him. (*They go up into the temple.*)

*Enter the PILGRIMS, seeking healing, accompanied by the VENDERS, who press their wares.*

FRUIT VENDER. Grapes of En-Gedi! Figs, ripe figs from Damascus! Who'll buy? *Who'll buy?*

WINE VENDER. Honey of wine! Honey of wine!

*The PEOPLE mount the steps, paying no heed.*

AN OLD MAN. Blessed, blessed day! Blessed are our eyes that see! Blessed are our ears that hear! Day seen in dreams by prophets of old! And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness! (*All join in.*) The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel! (*They pass into the temple shouting.*) Hosanna! Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

*The VENDERS shrug and seat themselves upon the steps, placing their wares beside them. They toss coins.*

WINE VENDER (*as he throws*). Fools! I wager thee a penny they come down, even as they ascend, yet believe themselves healed.

FRUIT VENDER (*throwing*). We—ll, — to believe, is it not to be?

WINE VENDER (*tartly*). To believe oneself a Solomon, is it to be one?

*Enter the DOVE-SELLER, crying his wares.*

DOVE SELLER. Doves for the temple! Doves! Very cheap! Very cheap! Doves for the sacrifice!

WINE VENDER. Hey, master Seller-of-doves-for-the-temple, thou'lt sell no doves *this* day!

DOVE SELLER. Not sell doves? (*Promptly.*)  
Ye lie! (He ascends steps.)

WINE VENDER (*calls after him with a grin*). Men are gone up, not for sacrifice, but for healing.

DOVE SELLER (*on top step, turns*). Healing? Bah! (*He spits, and disappears within the temple.*)

BLIND MAN (*tremulously*). Healing? Healing?

WINE VENDER. Chut, old man, content thee! Thine eyes are dead—dead. They won't be healed this side of kingdom come.

BLIND MAN. Eh?

WINE VENDER. God meant thee to be blind, else he had made thee see.

FRUIT VENDER. Thou'rt very sure. And did God also give thee a red nose, or is it the fault of the wine shop?

WINE VENDER (*rising, outraged*). Thou sayest I drink? (*They scuffle, falling against the BLIND MAN. The WINE VENDER falls atop, and pommels the other, shouting*) Do I drink? Do I? Do I?

FRUIT VENDER (*sputtering*). Of course! By all means! Certainly! Thou'rt a man of sense!

WINE VENDER (*suddenly releasing him and rising*). Most certainly I do. But a red nose? That cometh from eating sour grapes—like thine. (*Both men grin comfortably.*)

*Enter a WOMAN and a BLIND CHILD. The CHILD drags a bit and the MOTHER stoops over him caressingly.*

WOMAN. Courage! When *he* hath touched thee, thou shalt be whole, for he maketh the lame to walk and the deaf to hear and the blind to see.

BLIND MAN (*struggling to rise*). The blind—to see?

WOMAN (*stooping and lifting the child*). Thou shalt touch but the hem of his garment. (*She swiftly ascends.*)

BLIND MAN (*calls*). Woman, woman, assist me! I too would see! (*But the woman has already passed into the temple.*)

WINE VENDER (*to BLIND MAN*). Hark'ee, fellow, thou hast a snug seat here by the temple stair, and much alms. I counsel thee, do not leave it to go chasing after this—er—person, who boasteth no possessions.

BLIND MAN (*murmurs*). If he gives—if he gives—*me light*. . . .

FRUIT VENDER (*good-naturedly assisting the BLIND MAN to rise*). Tut, old one, I'll lead thee. I too have a curiosity. . . .

WINE VENDER. Pah! I'd as soon see the devil!

FRUIT VENDER. Eh? Thank God *I* have an open mind!

*The PRIESTS, ANNAS, CAIAPHAS, NATHANAEL, and the PHARISEES issue from the temple, with distaste writ large upon their countenances, and descend.*

WINE VENDER. The open mind? Tch! 'Tis a door wide open for devils to enter in.

FRUIT VENDER. In the likeness of thy imagin-



ings? Click, goes the door! Thou shalt not enter, foul fiend, I defy thee! (*He grins.*)

BLIND MAN (*timidly*). But—no one could do the miracles—he doeth, except God were with him.

FIRST PHARISEE (*who by now is abreast of the BLIND MAN*). Chut! He doeth them by Beelzebub.

FRUIT VENDER (*turns to him and others*). Masters of Israel, is not the prophet yonder—man of God?

FIRST PHARISEE. Thou art his disciple?

FRUIT VENDER. Not I! But I have an open mind.

THIRD PHARISEE. An open mind! Thou rarest thing in this universe of God's creating! An open mind! Why, man, thou'rt more of a curiosity than him yonder. An open mind! (*He goes off into gales of laughter.*)

FRUIT VENDER (*stands uncomfortably shifting from one foot to another, but doggedly holds his ground*). I asked, be he of God or no?

ANNAS. An open mind? Good! Judge then by his fruits if this man be of God. Taste the fruit of his doctrine; then swallow or spue it forth!

FRUIT VENDER. Give me to taste, master!

ANNAS. Go—fall on his neck and call a Samaritan, brother!

FRUIT VENDER. A Samaritan—brother! Curses on him! I will call all the world brother, only not a Samaritan!

ANNAS. Humph! Spue it forth and taste again.



Take thy hard-won earnings and share with the nearest beggar!

WINE VENDER. Ha, ha! A good jest, master!

CAIAPHAS (*wheeling on him*). No jest at all—as thou shalt see if thou swallow this man's teaching. (*He turns to the FRUIT VENDER.*) How tastes it, fellow?

FRUIT VENDER. But—but—ye mean——

ANNAS. I mean, he would have all share and share alike, and no man richer than his fellow.

FRUIT VENDER (*bewildered*). But—by the morrow, some would ha' spent, and some would ha' gained, and all would be as aforetime.

CAIAPHAS. Then—try it!

ANNAS. In short, this man, Jesus, would overturn our world. Charity, beautiful charity, would be no more. Why, this poor blind man, I could not give him alms.

FRUIT VENDER. Not give—alms?

ANNAS. No, for he would fare sumptuously upon *thy* earnings.

WINE VENDER (*in righteous indignation*). If these be his doctrines, then I say, for the good of the state, he should be put away. Why, masters, he is stirring up the common people,—them with open minds! (*With a sly glance toward the FRUIT VENDER.*)

CAIAPHAS. But, if we accuse him, will not the—er—— (*With a humorous glance at the WINE VENDER.*)—common people protect him?

WINE VENDER. The people? Pah! (*He spits.*)

NATHANAEL. But his disciples?

WINE VENDER. Will save themselves.

ANNAS. But the folk whom he hath healed?

CAIAPHAS. Where are the folk whom he hath healed? Show me one!

FRUIT VENDER (*courageously*). My brother's son, he was a leper, and this man healed him.

CAIAPHAS. Bah! I do not believe it.

FRUIT VENDER (*eagerly*). But it is so, sir! I saw it myself that he is clean.

CAIAPHAS. Then he never was a leper. (*He, with the other PRIESTS descend toward the left of the cloister.*)

FIRST PHARISEE (*to FRUIT VENDER*). Hark'ee, man, let not thy tongue wag too freely lest we hold thee his disciple. Would'st thou be anathema and outcast of Jewry? (*He and the other PHARISEES join the PRIESTS.*)

*The FRUIT VENDER shrinks slightly back and the BLIND MAN is left standing alone.*

*A CHILD runs suddenly out of the temple. He is followed by his MOTHER, and, more slowly, by MARY OF MAGDALA.*

CHILD (*as he runs*). Let me away! Away!

THE MOTHER (*catching him up at the foot of the steps*). Child, child, calm thee!

MARY OF MAGDALA (*descending toward them and speaking compassionately*). Be of good cheer!

Devils afflicted also me, but he drove them from me. He looked at me, and at his look I felt virtue descending upon me.

CHILD (*regarding her with hostile eyes*). I will not have this man of God take them and drive them out! *Poor little devils!*

MARY OF MAGDALA (*kneeling beside him*). See, little one, since the devils have gone forth, I have seen angels, always angels, clothed in white. . . .

*A pause. The CHILD regards her, then speaks suddenly.*

CHILD. Angels? Show *me* angels. (*He puts his hand in hers.*)

MARY OF MAGDALA. Come then! (*They mount the stairs slowly, the child one step at a time. The MOTHER follows with a psalm of thanksgiving in her face.*)

*As they mount the LAME BOY enters, with another BOY.*

THE BOY (*assisting*). Patience! A few steps more and thou shalt see him, and he shall heal thee.

LAME BOY. Not *me!* Not *me!* I have been lame since my mother bore me.

THE OTHER BOY (*gently*). But when Messiah cometh, he shall do all things. Then shall the lame man leap as the hart and the tongue of the dumb sing!

LAME BOY (*with a catch in his breath*). But not *me!* Never *me!* (*They pass into the temple.*)

BLIND MAN. Messiah! Is Messiah come . . . to open the blind eyes, to bring the prisoners out of

prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house?

MARY OF MAGDALA (*turns and looks down on him, and speaks softly*). The people that sit in darkness have seen a great light; unto them that sit in the valley of the shadow of death, unto them hath the light shined!

BLIND MAN. The people—that sit in darkness—have seen—A GREAT LIGHT! (*He turns and stumbles up the steps into the temple.*)

FIRST PHARISEE (*with a short laugh*). Messiah—he—man of the people, stained with the dust of the road-side!

MARY OF MAGDALA. And what go men up for to see? A man, clothed in soft raiment? Such sit in king's palaces.

SECOND PHARISEE. And do ye not make him king, him whom ye hail "David's son?" Who rideth royally into Jerusalem upon an ass, and crowned with . . .

MARY OF MAGDALA. The people's praise?

Nay! When he of Nazareth is King of the Jews, then shall the heavens be darkened and the earth lose her light. . . .

ALL (*craning forward*). Eh?

MARY OF MAGDALA (*scornfully*). Thinkest thou the Lord of heaven cometh down for earthly glory?

CAIAPHAS. The Lord of heaven! . . . Woman, whom holdest thou him to be?

MARY OF MAGDALA. He is the Christ, the son of the living God!



NATHANAEL. But this is blasphemy! Woman, thou shalt testify before the Sanhedrim!

MARY OF MAGDALA. Yea, I shall testify . . . according to the sight of mine eyes and the hearing of mine ears, . . . and my witness shall stand, and all the powers of death and hell shall not prevail against it! (*She turns and enters the temple, with the WOMAN and her CHILD.*)

FIRST PHARISEE (*in awed tones*). The Christ . . . son of the living God!

O Annas, shall not this suffice? Shall not this rouse the people? Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one* God! [Thou shalt have]. . . .

ANNAS (*coldly*). Thou fool! This is not Moses' day, when God's oneness was in the heart of all Israel, when God's wrath visibly smote the people. This is not Sinai, where men rose and slew each man his brother who bowed to the golden image. This is today.

Today men slay only in defence of the golden image, stamped with Caesar's sign and superscription.

Touch a man's gold; this only shall suffice to rouse the people.

NATHANAEL. And doth he not? I tell thee he soweth seed shall grow a revolution in men's hearts, the revolution of the world's possessions. Because of his word, the poor shall be rich and the rich, poor.

ANNAS (*shaking his head*). I doubt me . . . soil's not fertile.

THIRD PHARISEE. But is not such seed-sowing sedition against Caesar, emperor beloved of Israel?

ANNAS. It toucheth not Caesar.

When revolution ariseth with swords and staves!



When revolution affecteth Caesar's taxes! Until then, Caesar will smile.

FIRST PHARISEE. But doth it not touch Caesar that men hail this Galilean "king" with mad hosannas?

ANNAS. It toucheth not Caesar.

Men may shout themselves hoarse in Jerusalem, but so long as his taxes are gathered safe to Caesar, Caesar will smile.

SECOND PHARISEE. But—if the tax were threatened?

ANNAS (*grimly*). We may say prayers.

SECOND PHARISEE. If the tax were threatened—and if we brought the offender unto Caesar . . . ?

*All turn to him with interest.*

ANNAS. *If!!*

SECOND PHARISEE. Shall he who plays David's son to the people pay tax to imperial Rome? That were to deny his kingship. Dare he pay?

ANNAS. Dare he refuse?

FIRST PHARISEE. Go up and ask him—before all the people . . . !

THIRD PHARISEE. But be wary! I doubt me he will see through thee, for he hath wit. God of Israel, his wit is admirable!

SECOND PHARISEE (*to THIRD PHARISEE*). Come thou with me! (*They two mount and enter into the temple.*)

NATHANAEL. Hark ye, Annas, what need of

further witness—merely to put away a man of the people? Hath not the Sanhedrim passed sentence?

ANNAS. Rome is master. An offence against the law signifieth nothing; Rome stirreth only at offence against Rome. Therefore must we arouse the people and force the hand of Caesar.

NATHANAEL. Rouse the people? Ye wait for that? Good-day! (*He turns as if to go, and flings back over his shoulder.*) The people crowd up to him for healing for all the world like sheep to a fat pasture.

FIRST PHARISEE (*nodding*). Like sheep!

CAIAPHAS. Yet a time cometh when this so-called shepherd will leave the pasture lands of healing, and mount to the arid heights. Then will the people follow? Then will their mad hosannas change to cries of "Crucify him!"

*The hangings before the temple door swing violently apart, and the DOVE SELLER appears between them. As he appears, doves issue and fly away. He casts the empty cages furiously before him.*

DOVE SELLER (*cries*). Requite him, O God of Israel! Gather stones, O Israel! Stones, stones, O ye men of Judæa! Gather stones to stone him!

*The MONEY CHANGERS appear behind him.*

FIRST MONEY CHANGER. Thou fool! Pocket thy losses and go home to dinner! Naught may we do against a multitude.

DOVE SELLER (*shrilly*). Pocket my losses? Never! Shall this be allowed? Shall he drive all trade from the temple? I shall appeal to the priests who fatten upon it. Where shall their profits [be if . . .]

FIRST MONEY CHANGER (*nudging him*). Shh! There they stand!

DOVE SELLER. I care not a whit! I stand upon my rights. Shall a nobody out of Galilee frown me from the temple of my fathers? Have we not sold doves for the sacrifice from generation to generation? Do I not pay well for the privilege? Who is he to dispute it? (*He descends as he speaks and eyes Caiaphas belligerently.*)

CAIAPHAS. Thou sayest well. No one may drive thee forth. Return thou!

DOVE SELLER (*exasperated*). But he hath done so!

NATHANAEL. Eh?

DOVE SELLER. He saith, "My father's house is an house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." Me—thieves! And then men turned upon us and we fled.

Annas. Ye fled—and wherefore?

SECOND MONEY CHANGER. For fear! He towered above us and we became like sheep. Where his eye alighteth, men become like sheep.

CAIAPHAS. No wonder the Romans lord it over us. Poor sheep of the House of Israel.

FIRST MONEY CHANGER (*feeling a lack of sympathy*). Nay, master, but he made a whip and drave us forth. Also [his followers . . .]

DOVE SELLER. A whip? 'Ay, so he did! A whip of many thongs.

FIRST MONEY CHANGER. They fell upon us and upset our tables.

SECOND MONEY CHANGER. Ye lie!

DOVE SELLER (*turning on him*). It was so, I tell ye! Likewise his followers armed themselves with staves; yea, they took up stones to stone us!

SECOND MONEY CHANGER (*in an unmoved tone*). Ye lie! (*He descends the steps slowly and thoughtfully.*)

DOVE SELLER. Go, join his followers, thou that kisseth the hand that smites!

SECOND MONEY CHANGER (*still quietly*). Ye lie! (*He passes out.*)

DOVE SELLER (*passionately*). Masters, masters, who is this man? Is he Herod, King of Jewry? Is he Pilate, Governor for Caesar? Is he Caiaphas, High priest of Israel? Who is he to lord it over God's temple?

ANNAS. Who but God may lord it over God's Temple?

ALL (*solemnly*). Who but God?

ANNAS. And what if this be he? (*The VENDERS and MONEY CHANGERS draw away, eyeing him uncertainly.*) Doth he not claim it? . . . to be Messiah? Son of the one God, he who hath made heaven the heaven of heavens, and this the house that he hath builded?

ROARS OF ANGER. Stone him! Gather stones to stone him! (*They shout it repeatedly.*)

ANNAS (*raising his hand for silence*). Hath he not said, Destroy this temple and in three days I will build it again?

*The people break into confused shouting, crying, now alone, now all together.*



FIRST PHARISEE. Said he that—[*in verity?*]

FRUIT VENDER. Said he that? Destroy the temple? Destroy *God's temple?*

DOVE SELLER. This temple was forty and six years in the building, and shall he build it [in three days?]

FIRST MONEY CHANGER. Our father's temple? The Holy of Holies?

ANNAS. Where he hath builded, may he not cast down? Cast out the money changers and the doves? Fall down, fall down and worship! Come O Israel, bow before the carpenter of Nazareth! Is he not the God who led you through Red Sea waters, and in the wilderness? Kiss ye the hand that smites!

VENDERS AND MONEY CHANGERS (*cry*). Destroy him! Stone him! Sacrilege! (*They look about for stones, seize the bottles of the WINE VENDER and rush up the steps.*)

CAIAPHAS (*cries*). Hold! (*They pause, looking at him over their shoulders.*) My father's house is a house of prayer, and would ye make it a scene of violence?

FIRST MONEY CHANGER. We go up in the name of our God to rouse the people.

CAIAPHAS. The people whom he hath healed?

ANNAS (*maliciously*). Hath he then healed them?

CAIAPHAS (*frowning*). Hath he not?

ANNAS (*steps forth and addresses the people*). Go not to those yonder! Poor lost sheep of the house of Israel! Seeing, they see not; hearing, do not



perceive. He blindeth the imagination of their heart that they may fall down and worship.

Go not up to them, go not up into the temple, but go through Jerusalem, and say to the people: Watch! For this is a thief which cometh to the sheepfold for to kill and to destroy. Watch! He would rob you of your law: Eye for eye! Tooth for tooth! and have ye kiss the hand that smites. He would rob you of your king, and seat himself on the throne of our father David. He would rob you of your God, and give you himself to worship—and—he would rob you of your possessions and scatter them broadcast.

Say unto the people: Be ready! All ye who have much and would keep, be ready! All ye who have little and would have, be on our side!

DOVE SELLER. Ready? When?

ANNAS. In the night-time—when yon thronging people sleepeth!

DOVE SELLER (*nods*). In the night-time! (*Virtuously.*) Not ours to desecrate the Temple of our God!

VENDERS AND MONEY CHANGERS. Not ours to desecrate the Temple of God!

*The PRIESTS and the PHARISEE depart. The VENDERS stoop to gather up their wares.*

*The BLIND MAN appears at the head of the steps, groping. The WINE VENDER grins at the FRUIT VENDER and jerks his head as much to say, Didn't I tell you?*

FRUIT VENDER (*going to the BLIND MAN's assistance*). Come, old one! Could he not heal thee, then?

BLIND MAN. So many thronged him—and now he prayeth. He would be alone with God. (*The other men nod at one another jeeringly. The BLIND MAN continues with undisturbed faith.*)

But when next he cometh to the temple, I shall be waiting. Then my old blind eyes shall see, and I shall arise. I shall arise and follow and cry, Hosanna! Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

WINE VENDER. When next he cometh! . . .  
La, la!

### ACT III

The hall of the house of Pontius Pilate.

*This hall opens back on to a terrace, below which is an open courtyard. The opening consists of a large arched door, and two smaller ones; or the smaller doors may be replaced by windows. This hall is raised. Thus, Pilate, addressing the people in the courtyard, stands well above them, so that they are unseen save at the very conclusion of the first division of the ACT. The wall may be stone or tapestry, painted a neutral color, or decorated in Roman design. Against the wall may be painted the Roman insignia, S. P. Q. R.; or, cut from brass, and mounted on a pole, it may be planted on the terrace. Through the door and windows shows a deep blue sky, possibly also a view of Jerusalem.*

*In the first portion of the ACT the light is moderate, both in back and foreground.*

*Two ROMAN SOLDIERS are standing on guard, or should be. At present, their rear only is seen as they crane their bodies to see the approaching mob.*

*From the distance comes the dull roar of an angry people.*

FIRST SOLDIER. There they come—the rabble—hounding that mad fellow to his death! Ugh!

SECOND SOLDIER. And a short time since—when was it?—that same rabble strawed their garments before him, shouting hosannas!

FIRST SOLDIER. Exactly five days! Many a rabble hath been switched round-about-face in lesser time.

SECOND SOLDIER. And will be—long as men let priests do their thinking for them.

FIRST SOLDIER. Thou godless man!

SECOND SOLDIER. Not I! But I *think*.

FIRST SOLDIER. Ho!

SECOND SOLDIER. I have marked the whispering in Jerusalem! Whispers in the ear of this one that this Jesus would abolish the law! Whispers in the ear of that one, that he would glad be king!

What matter if they be lies? Much may be done by whispering, my master—and gold.

FIRST SOLDIER. Thou knowest—eh?—by experience?

SECOND SOLDIER. By imagination!

FIRST SOLDIER *chuckles, and claps the other on the back.*

SECOND SOLDIER. But—is it not true . . . ?

FIRST SOLDIER. It is true . . . he uttereth wicked seditious words.

SECOND SOLDIER. Eh? What? Lies, I'll *warrant*. . . .

FIRST SOLDIER. I scarce dare utter them.

SECOND SOLDIER. Tell *me!*

FIRST SOLDIER (*pretending to look cautiously about*). He saith—LOVE YOUR ENEMIES!  
(*He draws back a step to observe the effect of his words.*)

SECOND SOLDIER. No!!!

FIRST SOLDIER. Also, if any man compel thee to give unto him thy cloak, thou render to him thy coat also.

SECOND SOLDIER. He was jesting.

FIRST SOLDIER (*stoutly*). Not *he!*

SECOND SOLDIER. Mad, then!

FIRST SOLDIER. Without a doubt! But then, all the world's mad save thee and me, and at times I doubt even thee!

*The SECOND SOLDIER digs the FIRST in the ribs and both stand at attention, as the PRIESTS and PHARISEES enter from the left.*

ANNAS (*calls*). Ho! Within!

*The PAGES OF PILATE come running from the right.*

ANNAS. Say to the Governor of Judaea that priests of Israel request audience. (*The PAGES go, ANNAS turns to the THIRD PHARISEE.*) Go to the temple; assemble quickly the money changers and sellers of doves; say to them that Jesus of Nazareth standeth before Pilate for judgment.

THIRD PHARISEE. No more, O Annas?



ANNAS. No more! Did ye not witness him driving the money changers from the temple?

THIRD PHARISEE. I witnessed it not.

ANNAS. He said, my father's house is a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves! And then he drave them thence with a scourge of cords.

THIRD PHARISEE. I doubt the tale.

ANNAS. I have it on good authority.

THIRD PHARISEE. Whose?

CAIAPHAS. Their livelihood is threatened if he live; you'll not dispute *that!* They will hasten to witness against him.

THIRD PHARISEE *shrugs and goes.* ANNAS *turns to the* FIRST PHARISEE.

ANNAS. Go thou to the rabble yonder. Here is gold. Bid them cry unto Pilate that he crucify this man and release unto them Barabbas.

FIRST PHARISEE. Barabbas—the *murderer?*

ANNAS. Even so!

FIRST PHARISEE. I shall need more gold.

ANNAS *gives it to him, and he passes out.*

*Enter the* PAGES OF PILATE.

PAGES (*announce*). The Lord Governor comes!  
(*They hold aside the curtain for* PILATE *to enter.*)

PILATE (*advancing brusquely toward them*).  
What would ye, priests of Israel?

CAIAPHAS. Justice on the Nazarene!



PILATE (*impatiently*). I have told you . . .  
(*He makes an effort to control himself.*) What accusation do ye bring against this innocent man?

CAIAPHAS. If he were not a malefactor we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

PILATE. Take ye him and judge him according to your law!

ANNAS. It is not lawful—we may not put a man to death.

PILATE. And he must die—eh? Naught else will content you?

ANNAS. He must die.

PILATE. From all I hear he is a just man, teaching love and gentleness.

ANNAS. He is a mad man, stirring revolution.

PILATE. Revolution? Of what nature? With swords and staves? Obviously not! Men tell me, who took him in Gethsemane's garden, that a follower out with his sword, and that this Jesus forbade, ay and rebuked him. What have ye to fear from such a man?

ANNAS. To a Roman is force alone fearful? We fear his teaching.

PILATE. And what is his teaching? Long have I desired an unbiassed statement. (*He folds his arms and prepares to listen with great enjoyment.*)

ANNAS (*slowly*). Call no man "master!" Give to him that asketh! Love your enemies!

PILATE. In short—he teacheth human brotherhood. Beautiful! Beautiful! (*The PRIESTS look*

*thoroughly disgusted.*) But thoroughly impracticable! I cannot think his ideas will win following. He will number his disciples by tens, not hundreds. By tens, did I say? Nay, on the fingers of one hand.

ANNAS (*suavely*). I grant you his followers will not be the rich, the well-content with things as they be: he calleth the poor men from the high-ways and by-ways, and biddeth them feast on the banquet spread for the mighty.

PILATE. Ay, but the mighty have swords and staves, and will use them—without scruple. With what will these poor gutter-men oppose them? With the turning of the other cheek? With a revolt of *love*?

SECOND PHARISEE. Caesar. . . .

PILATE. Caesar will not fear love.

SECOND PHARISEE. Most gracious governor, 'tis we who fear Caesar. If this man's words be carried unto Caesar, the ruin of our people is assured—and thy ruin, O Pilate, if thou suffer him live.

PILATE. What words?

SECOND PHARISEE. We went up to him in the midst of the people. We said, Friend, enlighten our ignorance. Is it lawful for us to pay tribute unto Caesar? And he said, Bring hither a penny! Whose is the image and superscription? We answered him, Caesar's. He said, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.

PILATE. Well—hath any refused tax because of this word?

SECOND PHARISEE. Nay . . . but . . .

PILATE. The word is then *negligible*.

SECOND PHARISEE. Is it so—to a Roman? To a Jew it signifieth the end of the Roman power, for to a Jew everything belongeth unto God.

PILATE. But Caesar will understand that *all* belongeth unto Caesar.

CAIAPHAS. But will he?

PILATE (*shortly*). Have ye the man?

CAIAPHAS. He waiteth under guard.

PILATE (*to the SOLDIERS*). Have him to the Judgment hall yonder! (*The SOLDIERS go out, back. PILATE turns to the PRIESTS.*) Ye alone are his accusers; come and confront him.

CAIAPHAS. Sir, the people be his accusers. (*Indicating the courtyard.*)

PILATE *steps through the arched door. Instantly he is greeted by a cry from the mob.*

PEOPLE. Hail, Pilate! Hail, Procurator of Judaea!

PILATE. What would ye, people of Jerusalem?

PEOPLE. Death! Death to the Nazarene! Death!  
DEATH!! DEATH!!!

NATHANAEL (*peering out*). Now they bring him.

*The PRIESTS and PHARISEES crane forward and express in pantomime their satisfaction or dismay as the scene progresses.*

PILATE. I have examined him and I find no fault in him.

PEOPLE (*shout*). Crucify him! Crucify him!

PILATE. Wherefore?

PEOPLE (*shout confusedly*). He maketh himself as God!

He's a [rebel!]

Despiseth [authority!]

Maketh himself [as God!]

[He goeth against the law!]

He would abolish [sacrifices!]

He maketh himself as God!

PILATE. Peace! (*He lifts his hand for silence and turns to the left as though addressing Jesus, who, like the people is unseen.*)

Hearst thou this, Jesus of Nazareth—the many things they witness against thee? Be these true? (*Pause of about ten seconds.*) Hast thou no answer?

CAIAPHAS (*brushes by PILATE and speaks vehemently*). Thou Jesus of Nazareth, who callest thyself Son of God—in the name of the Jewish people I call on thee to answer for thy sins! (*Pause of about twenty seconds. Then CAIAPHAS turns to join others, muttering.*) Sullen dog!

PILATE. Is there none to speak in thy defense? Where are the throngs that followed thee into Jerusalem not five days since, decking thy way like a conqueror?

NATHANAEL (*cries*). Like a king!

PEOPLE (*shout*). Like a King! Like a King!  
He maketh himself king—King of the Jews!



PILATE. Art thou a king?

PEOPLE (*shout*). Crucify him! Crucify him!

PILATE. And shall I crucify your king?

PEOPLE. We'll have no king but Caesar! No king but Caesar!

PILATE. Hearken: This is the time of your feast of the Passover, when it is customary for Rome to release unto you one prisoner. Shall it be this righteous man?

PEOPLE (*shout*). Barabbas! Release unto us Barabbas!

PILATE. Barabbas—the murderer?

PEOPLE (*shout*). Barabbas! Barabbas!

PILATE. Ye are all mad. Whither of the twain will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas—thief? Or Jesus—called the Christ?

PEOPLE (*shout*). Barabbas! We will that ye release unto us Barabbas!

*Above the noise of the people is heard a single voice shouting, Jesus the Christ.*

*The PRIESTS crane their bodies to discover the owner, but he is soon drowned out by repeated cries of, Crucify him! Release unto us Barabbas!*

PILATE. Why? What evil hath this man done?

DOVE SELLER (*mounting before PILATE*). O my lord, we have a law and by that law he ought to die, because he maketh himself Son of God.

*The PAGE advances and touches PILATE.*

PAGE. Sir, thy lady!



PILATE'S WIFE *enters and advances. He turns to her.*

PILATE'S WIFE. O my husband, have thou nothing to do with this just man!

PILATE. What hast thou to do with this?

PILATE'S WIFE. I have suffered many things this day concerning him. I dreamed a dream. . . .

CAIAPHAS (*scornfully*). A dream!

PILATE'S WIFE. I dreamed a dream, that from this man's death, if thou consent to it, thou shalt nevermore be clean.

PILATE. (*muses for the space of about thirty seconds; then he turns to the people*). Men of Judaea, I find no fault with this man. Nevertheless I will have him scourged, and then I will let him go. I stand for the law of Rome.

CAIAPHAS. Thou standest for Caesar! Wilt thou let live a man that fostereth rebellion?

Thou standest for Caesar! Wilt thou let go free a man that calleth himself "King of the Jews?"

NATHANAEL. Shall it be reported to Caesar that Pontius Pilate let Caesar's foe escape?

PILATE. I fear ye not! I am Caesar's friend.

CAIAPHAS. If thou set this man free, thou art no friend to Caesar.

*There is a pause of about thirty seconds.*

PILATE. Mean ye—revolt will follow, if this man die not?

CAIAPHAS. (*deliberately*). We mean—we hold it expedient—that this man die for the people.

*There is a long pause. Then PILATE speaks abruptly to his WIFE.*

PILATE. Bring water! (*She goes with PAGES. PILATE approaches the PRIESTS and speaks significantly.*) He dies—that we may live.

ANNAS. He dies—that our world, our laws, our customs, may endure.

CAIAPHAS. He dies . . . for that he goeth against the God-of-things-as-they-are.

PILATE. Ah,—that is the only sacrilege!

*The PAGES enter with basin, pitcher of water and towel. PILATE'S wife takes the basin and holds it before him. The PAGE pours water on his hands.*

PILATE (*washes his hands in the face of the multitude*). I am innocent of the blood of this just man.

*His WIFE shrinks away from him in horror.*

PEOPLE (*shout*). Huzza! Huzza! His blood be upon us!

Ay, and upon our children! Huzza! Huzza!

PILATE (*breaks his staff*). Take him—and crucify him! (*He throws the broken staff among the people.*)

PEOPLE (*shout*). Huzza! Huzza! A crown of thorns and a reed to make merry! Hail, King of the Jews! All hail! (*As they shout, there is seen a medley of tossing arms, one brandishing a reed and a crown of thorns.*)

*The PRIESTS and PHARISEE hasten away.*

PILATE'S WIFE. Not all the rivers of Judæa shall wash thee clean.

*The curtain descends to mark the passage of a few hours.*

*When the curtain rises it is about the ninth hour. A chair has been placed at the right of the hall, facing the left squarely. PILATE is seated in the chair, brooding. One PAGE stands at his left.*

*The room is in semi-shadow, but the view through the doors shows Jerusalem, brilliant with the setting sun.*

PILATE. Bring wine! (*The PAGE goes.*) Horrible heat! (*He throws off cloak, then relapses gloomily into his seat.*)

*The PAGE enters, bringing goblet and pitcher and accompanied by the second PAGE.*

SECOND PAGE. My lord, Joseph of Arimathaea asketh audience.

PILATE. Tell him to go to the———nay, admit him! No canting priest, he!

*The SECOND PAGE goes. The FIRST PAGE pours wine. PILATE drinks.*

*The second PAGE enters, followed by JOSEPH of ARIMATHAEA.*

SECOND PAGE (*announces*). Joseph of Arimathaea! (*He goes out, with the FIRST PAGE.*)

PILATE. Well—have ye come to revile me, or fawn upon me?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Neither, Lord Governor.

PILATE. I have slain him. (*There is a pause.*) Have ye naught to say?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. You have cast out of

the world a very beautiful thing. The world is less good to live in.

PILATE (*straightening in his chair*). Is that all? Speak plainly! I have done a damnable thing. I have let myself be used, I—Pontius Pilate—Governor of Judæa,—and those swine, priests and Pharisees still live. (*He leans forward earnestly.*)

Who is this man? Whence is he?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. He came out from God and he returneth thither unto Him again.

PILATE. Men say—'tis one of the accusations—he maketh himself out to be *as God*—What say you?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA (*roused out of his quietude*). *As God?* You are mad! Why the man is a Jew—brought up on the first commandment: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one God!*

Jesus of Nazareth is his dear-loved son—as are we all—but, O God of Israel, how much more in the divine likeness!

PILATE (*after a pause of consideration, pursing his lips*). Well—what would you of me?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. O my Lord, I loved the man! Give me his body!

*The sunset light fades slowly.*

PILATE. To what end?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. I have a tomb, wherein never yet man was laid. I would lap him in myrrh and aloes and bear his wounded body thither. I would have those he loved minister unto him.

PILATE. Is he dead? 'Tis but the ninth hour.



JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. He is dying. He rests upon a cross between two thieves, and on the cross is written: This is the King of the Jews! (PILATE *laughs a little low laugh*. JOSEPH *draws slightly away*.) Lord, was this thy doing?

PILATE (*with some show of amusement*). Ay! The priests came unto me, arrogantly demanding I change the inscription to: This is he who *calleth* himself King of the Jews!—But I would not.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA (*gravely*). Never hath a king ruled in greater majesty than he of Golgotha. (*There is a pause during which the darkness without seems to fill the chamber.*)

Behold, darkness comes, and by our law he must be buried ere the sabbath dawn. Give me, I pray thee, the body of my friend!

PILATE (*rising and approaching the door*). This is not the darkness of night. 'Tis but the ninth hour! There ariseth a storm from the heated day. See how blackness sweeps across Jerusalem.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Blackness sweeps across the world.

PILATE (*turning back*). Ye hint at dread things! Begone, you and your Jewish superstitions! By tomorrow's sunlight mankind will have forgot one man's death.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Ay—in the resurrection!

PILATE. Speak plainly!

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Out of the winter ever cometh spring; out of the death of the tomb shall rise the living Christ.



PILATE. You evade me. Mean you his *body* will rise?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. It was not his body the priests hated. What they sought to slay will flower in the hearts of men a thousand years.

PILATE. What was it the priests sought to slay?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Truth!

PILATE (*leaning forward in his chair*). What is truth?

*There is a pause, then, without, the storm breaks over the city accompanied by lightning. There are confused cries of people panic-stricken. Ai! Ai!*

PILATE. Hearken! (*He calls.*) Ho, without!

*The PAGES come running.*

PILATE. What means this rush of people? What hath stirred them?

PAGE. Sir, the unnatural darkness! These coward men are frightened at their deed. They throng hither from Calvary, crying that the ground shakes, and the graves give up their dead, and thunders shake the heavens.

ANNAS *and* NATHANAEL *enter with hasty footsteps.*

PILATE (*rises*). Sirs, ye are bold. Ye seek me unbidden.

ANNAS. Lord Governor, we demand the body of the crucified [in the name of the Sanhedrim!]

PILATE (*thoroughly exasperated*). Now whose servant am I? Shall I take schooling from you

Jewish priests? I shall give the body unto whom I will.

NATHANAEL. But lord we fear. . . .

PILATE. I am glad of it. I also fear from this mad day's doings.

NATHANAEL. We fear—the resurrection.

PILATE. Explain.

ANNAS. One day as this man passed by the Temple of our fathers he was heard to say—(*To NATHANAEL.*) Speak thou! Thou heardest him.

NATHANAEL. He said, Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it again.

PILATE. So! well?

NATHANAEL (*impressively*). 'Tis thought—he spake of the temple of his body.

PILATE'S WIFE *enters unnoticed, behind him.*  
*From this point the sky gradually clears.*

PILATE. Ha, ha! Ye mean he will rise from the grave and smite you? May I be there to see!

ANNAS (*much annoyed*). We do not mean anything [so foolish.]

NATHANAEL. [We are not of the credulous.]

ANNAS. We fear lest his disciples steal the body and proclaim him risen, to the deceiving of the multitude.

PILATE. (*lifting his hand and speaking with amusement*). Be calm! No man would credit anything so palpably absurd.

ANNAS. Man will believe anything—anything! Never yet have I found aught so impossible of credence that it found no apostle.

PILATE (*mutters*). Ye should know. (*Aloud.*) Bah! Ye are the credulous. Ye fear him dead as living. And if they did proclaim the resurrection, what then?

ANNAS. Then—based on a lying marvel, his ideals would flood the world, ideals hostile to the established order. Can a Roman desire his triumph?

PILATE'S WIFE. Whether or no, his triumph is assured. (*All turn to her, perceiving her for the first time.*)

PILATE. Eh? The man is dead?

PILATE'S WIFE. He is dead—but he will live forever in the hearts of men—because of his word. Dying he saith, Father forgive them [for they know not what they do.]

NATHANAEL. Give us the body, lord. . . .

ANNAS. Give us the body. . . . (*They speak simultaneously.*)

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA (*pressing forward*). My lord—?

PILATE. Enough! (*To JOSEPH.*) Go thou and take the body and bury it deep—deep that it plague me not again.

ANNAS (*turning to JOSEPH*). Joseph of Arimathaea, thou art of us, a member of the Sanhedrim. I call upon thee to yield up the body.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. I will not.

NATHANAEL. What means this?

ANNAS. Joseph of Arimathaea, I distrust thee. Thou wert not present when we voted the death of this man Jesus. Thou art neither hot nor cold.

NATHANAEL. If thou yield the body of Jesus to his disciples, thou art no true son of Israel.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA (*bowing to PILATE*). My lord, I thank thee. (*He turns to go, then flings back over his shoulder.*) I yield the body to no one. (*He goes.*)

ANNAS (*to PILATE*). Revoke thy order!

PILATE. I will not. (*He sinks back in his chair, yawning.*) Take soldiers, watch ye three days beside the tomb of Joseph, and, when the Son of God ariseth, bring me word, that I may see him.

PRIESTS (*blackly*). Blasphemer!

#### ACT IV

A street in Jerusalem in front of the house of Caiaphas.

*From the center of the house of Caiaphas a sort of balcony juts forth, about six feet or less, above the ground. At the right of the balcony is an arched entrance, leading into the house. High above this is a small double arched window. Several feet to the left of the balcony the house ends, but it is connected with the next house (off stage) by a flying buttress, which slopes from the house of CAIAPHAS downwards, so that a glimpse of sky may be obtained. The flying buttress is pierced by a large arched passageway leading to streets beyond.*

*It is the third day, early morning, before it is yet light.*



MARY OF MAGDALA and SALOME, *seen hardly more than shadows, enter from the right. Their robes are sombre and their air dejected. They carry vases of spice and perfume. They pass out under the great arch.*

*There is a faint lightening of the air.*

MARY and SALOME reappear, running with fleet feet. They are wonder-eyed. They pass out to the right. In a few moments two men appear and run through the arch, followed, after a few seconds, by MARY. Then the people begin to pass through, silently, but with strained, eager faces, hastening toward the tomb.

A SERVANT opens the shutters of the house of CAIAPHAS, looks out, yawns, and disappears.

The BLIND MAN enters from the left, and takes his place, under the arch. After a few seconds the FRUIT VENDER follows.

FRUIT VENDER. Eh, little father, why dost sit here on the road to nowhere?

BLIND MAN. Hark'ee, if he come, he must pass me by.

FRUIT VENDER. He! Who?

BLIND MAN. The master! Said he not, "The third day!" The third day he would come again?

FRUIT VENDER. What! Dost think the spirit of the dead will live again—and enter his mortal body?

BLIND MAN. I wait to see.

FRUIT VENDER (*pitying*). Best come with me!



I'll lead thee to thy seat 'neath the temple stairs.  
The pilgrims will fill thy cup with pennies.

BLIND MAN. Eh, lad, I may sit there no longer.

FRUIT VENDER. And wherefore?

BLIND MAN (*with a nod toward the house of CAIAPHAS*). They—the priests, forbade. They said, Thou hast chose thy master; go seek him in the tomb! (*The face of the FRUIT VENDER blackens with anger.*) So I sought him, lad, I sought him, but Rome's soldiers, they drave me hence . . . but he must pass me by—here—if he cometh, eh, lad?

FRUIT VENDER. Content thee. The dead are dead—and happy—so be it they are with God.

BLIND MAN. Needs not death for that, lad!

FRUIT VENDER. Eh, little father, can a man behold God's face—and live?

BLIND MAN. Can a man live without him?

FRUIT VENDER. Ay, that can he!—and prosper! 'Tis they flourish greatliest—for they refuse alms to the blind man, and drive him from temple stair! . . . God requite them!

BLIND MAN. No, no, lad, say it not! . . . Harken! (*He looks upward.*)

FRUIT VENDER (*following his glance*). The note of a bird!

BLIND MAN. Is it day yet?

FRUIT VENDER. Dawn breaketh. Sky pales behind Olivet.

BLIND MAN. There's strange peace fills the air. Seems curiously as though the world stood still—holding its breath—to listen. . . .

FRUIT VENDER. To what? 'Tis ever so before the dawn. And then—birds' twitter and chatter of market-place, and day followeth day, and the evil slay the good, and I find not God in this, his world.

BLIND MAN. Thou speaketh as a child that hath buried the day. God giveth to all things resurrection.

FRUIT VENDER. But—if we have buried *GOD*?

BLIND MAN. The grave cannot hold him; death cannot celebrate him. . . .

FRUIT VENDER (*startled*). Man,—thinkest thou him slain on Calvary—God?

BLIND MAN (*smiling gently*). God? God spake through him as never yet through man, but—can God indeed dwell in houses of clay? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. . . .

FRUIT VENDER (*petulantly, through reaction of feeling*). Then—[thy meaning?]

BLIND MAN. There cometh a little wind and a whiff of day.

*As he speaks, the sunlight gilds the top of the house of CAIAPHAS. Enter, from the left, the WINE VENDER, strapping on his bottles.*

FRUIT VENDER. Ay, dawn cometh. That's miracle enough for me. The sunlight gilds the peak of the temple and all Jerusalem flashes into glory.

WINE VENDER. Ay, old man, dawn cometh; (*Maliciously*)—third day hath dawned! And naught hath resurrection save red Judean lilies.

*There is a distant cry of HOSANNA! repeated again and again.*

BLIND MAN. Hearken!

WINE VENDER. 'Tis song of pilgrims as they leave the temple. (*To FRUIT VENDER.*) Haste thee, or thou wilt lose a day's profit!

FRUIT VENDER. That was no pilgrim song; that was a shout—a shout of gladness. (*He runs through arch a little way.*)

*The cry is heard again.*

BLIND MAN. Hearken! (*All listen. The BLIND MAN rises.*)

BLIND MAN. The Christ is risen!

WINE VENDER. [Bah!]

BLIND MAN. The Christ is risen!

FRUIT VENDER (*hastens back, crying*). Look! Look yonder! (*He drags the WINE VENDER to the arch.*) People gather!

WINE VENDER. A street brawl!

FRUIT VENDER (*excitedly*). Man, man, yon lies the tomb of Joseph!

WINE VENDER (*shaking him off*). I care not!

FRUIT VENDER. I care! (*He hastens toward the shouting.*)

WINE VENDER. Imbecile! (*He goes out toward the right, where lies the temple and his profits.*)

*The BLIND MAN stands straining his ears to hear. As the scene progresses, he gradually sinks*

*to his former position, and buries his head in his arms, as though to shut out the voice of the world.*

*The FIRST and THIRD PHARISEES enter hastily from under the arch, and pound on the door of the house of CAIAPHAS. The SERVANT looks out of the window, but before she can unbar the door CAIAPHAS appears on the balcony.*

CAIAPHAS. Well——?

FIRST PHARISEE. O Caiaphas, men proclaim him risen! I [feared this, I feared this all along....]

CAIAPHAS. Come, come, who say so?

FIRST PHARISEE. Everybody! 'Twill be [worse now . . . ]

CAIAPHAS. The rabble!

FIRST PHARISEE. But he hath been seen....

CAIAPHAS. By you?

FIRST PHARISEE (*shuddering*). Not I! 'Twas a woman saw him. She telleth her tale yonder to the thronging curious.

CAIAPHAS. What woman?

THIRD PHARISEE. Mary of Magdala.

CAIAPHAS. Humph! We know of this Mary of Magdala, of old. She hath ever seen strange visions. Bring her to me!

FIRST PHARISEE (*doubtfully*). Then you do not believe?

CAIAPHAS (*leaning over the balcony*). My good sir, the foolish believe; the vulgar know, but the wise man doubts—doubts eternally.



THIRD PHARISEE (*as he turns to do CAIAPHAS' bidding*). The wise man separates the chaff from the wheat (*Exit.*)

FIRST PHARISEE (*nervously*). I feared this, I feared it all along. 'Twill be worse now than if we had not slain him.

CAIAPHAS. We must quench these idle tales. Attend! I will go with thee. (*He turns and enters his house.*)

*The FIRST PHARISEE paces to and fro before the arch, then calls.*

FIRST PHARISEE. Ho, men! (*He beckons. Enter the two SOLDIERS of PILATE.*) Come ye from the tomb of Joseph?

FIRST SOLDIER (*with ill-temper*). May the gods cause fire and brimstone to rain on the tomb of Joseph!

CAIAPHAS *issues from his house, more fully clad.*

CAIAPHAS. Hither, men! Give an account of your guarding of the tomb.

FIRST SOLDIER. Sir, we owe account to no man save to our officer.

CAIAPHAS *takes a gold piece from his pouch.*

FIRST SOLDIER. Sir, we stood guard from midnight until dawn. (*He pockets the gold piece.*)

CAIAPHAS. And naught disturbed you?

FIRST SOLDIER. Naught disturbed us.

CAIAPHAS. Ye mean—ye slept.



FIRST SOLDIER (*virtuously*). A Roman soldier never sleeps.

CAIAPHAS. Ye slept. (*He gives the FIRST SOLDIER another gold piece.*)

FIRST SOLDIER (*scratches his ear and turns to the SECOND SOLDIER doubtfully*). Did we?

CAIAPHAS (*giving a piece of gold to the SECOND SOLDIER*). Ye slept.

SECOND SOLDIER (*grinning*). I remember now—we slept.

FIRST SOLDIER. Tell us what more we did, master priest. What did we dream?

CAIAPHAS. The disciples of Jesus came by night, and stole away the body while ye slept.

FIRST SOLDIER. And if this come to the governor's ear?

CAIAPHAS. We will see to it that ye suffer nothing.

FIRST SOLDIER. So be it! (*He turns to go.*)

CAIAPHAS. Wait ye! I'll give you writing to the governor shall secure you—and hark ye, clap in prison all men, ay, or women who cry, He is risen. (*He turns to the FIRST PHARISEE.*) That should suffice. (*They two enter his house.*)

FIRST SOLDIER (*to SECOND SOLDIER*). Good imperial doctrine that! Lock 'em up! Gaol them—all who gainsay me!

SECOND SOLDIER. Eh, comrade?

FIRST SOLDIER. Go, build me some prisons, comrade!

SECOND SOLDIER (*grinning*). How many?

FIRST SOLDIER *makes a gesture with his arms as though to include all humanity.*

*There is a distant shouting of hosannas. It grows louder. Presently people hasten through the arch, surrounding MARY OF MAGDALA. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA follows with the THIRD PHARISEE.*

PEOPLE. Allelujah! He is risen! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!

CAIAPHAS *followed by the FIRST PHARISEE, appears on the balcony.*

CAIAPHAS (*raising his hand for quiet*). Peace, men! Bring the woman hither. And do you, Mary, tell your tale—what you heard and saw.

THIRD PHARISEE. Fear not.

MARY OF MAGDALA. I fear not. You can but destroy this body.

CAIAPHAS. Pish! Tell your tale! And you—(*to the crowd*) begone!

*The people go. The BLIND MAN raises his head to listen.*

MARY OF MAGDALA. O sirs,—early in the morning, while it was yet dark, I came unto the sepulchre, and saw the stone taken away. And I ran to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and I know not where they have laid him.

And they both ran together, and beheld the linen cloths lying,—and the napkin. And they both ran away again.

But I,—I stood by the sepulchre, weeping; and as I wept, I stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and I saw two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

And they said unto me, Woman, why weepest thou?

I said unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

And when I had thus said, I turned myself back and saw Jesus standing,—and knew not that it was Jesus.

He saith unto me, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?

I,—supposing him to be the gardener, said unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him,—and I will take him away.

He saith unto me, Mary!

I said unto him, Rabboni! Master!

He saith unto me, Touch me not,—for I am not yet ascended unto my father,—but go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my father,—and your father; and to my God and your God.

*There is a pause; then CAIAPHAS turns and speaks vehemently.*

CAIAPHAS. *It was the gardener.*

MARY, *smiling faintly, shakes her head.*

CAIAPHAS. Woman, who taught thee?

MARY OF MAGDALA. Taught? Sir, I spake as I saw.

CAIAPHAS. As you dreamed—lying tongue! Go! Begone! Retract thy tale!

MARY OF MAGDALA. I will not.

CAIAPHAS. Means shall be found to force thee. (*To the SOLDIERS.*) Take her away, and guard her well. Her mind is shattered. (*He gives them paper.*)

*The SOLDIERS take her away amid dead silence. There is a pause.*

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Well?

CAIAPHAS. Well—she is only one; she may be suppressed.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA (*smiling*). By tomorrow there will be a hundred who have seen him. A hundred, did I say? A thousand!

FIRST PHARISEE (*aghast*). And ye believe?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. I believe he will spring to life in a thousand hearts.

CAIAPHAS. You quibble!

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. You—we—have buried his teaching deep—deep—; but in due time it will have resurrection. Then war will go, the old ways of the world. . . .

FIRST PHARISEE. The old ways are sweet.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. “Behold a sower went forth to sow,—and some seed fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air devoured it. And other fell



on rocky ground,—and because it had no root it withered away. And other fell among thorns,—and the thorns grew up and choked it. And others fell on good ground and brought forth, some thirty-fold, some sixtyfold, and some an hundredfold.”

*There is a pause.*

CAIAPHAS. You—you are become a follower of this Jesus!

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA (*meets his gaze squarely, and replies after the briefest interval*).  
Yea!

*There is a pause.*

FIRST PHARISEE (*leaning curiously over the balcony*). And will you give up your goods to feed the poor?

THIRD PHARISEE. And will you endure a blow and return it not again?

CAIAPHAS (*keenly*). Can you live on the height of the Sermon on the Mount?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA. I know not. Are we not all of the valley? But— (*He turns slowly and goes.*)

*The others watch his departure with dismay. CAIAPHAS and the FIRST PHARISEE turn and eye one another.*

CAIAPHAS. Ye know,—and I know—this man Jesus is safe dead, but if his ideas sprout on every bush, what are we benefitted?

THIRD PHARISEE (*musingly*). *What are we benefitted? (At his tone the others turn and regard him askance. He continues as though to himself.)* “De-



stroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again."

CAIAPHAS. Well?

THIRD PHARISEE. The people claim he spake of God's temple at Jerusalem, but his disciples say he spake of the temple of his body. . . .

CAIAPHAS (*sneeringly*). Well—art thou, too, turned believer?

THIRD PHARISEE (*looking up*). What if he spake of the temple of his thought?

FIRST PHARISEE (*stares, then shrugs*). Too deep for me!

THIRD PHARISEE. We have destroyed his body; may not his thought arise and carry the world up as by eagle's wings?

CAIAPHAS. No, no, my friend, you dream! The world is too heavy-laden—too self-laden; his word calls for self-crucifixion.

If his word arise in the heart of man,—throughout all ages men will seek to bury it again.

As it was in the beginning,—is now—and ever shall be, World without end, Amen!

FIRST PHARISEE. And Amen!

CAIAPHAS and the FIRST PHARISEE turn from the balcony and reenter the house of CAIAPHAS. The THIRD PHARISEE, after a moment's thought, passes out in the direction taken by JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA.

There is a brief pause; then the BLIND MAN looks up. The sunlight has lowered on the house of CAIAPHAS, so that when the BLIND MAN rises, he rises into the light.

BLIND MAN (*where he still crouches by the arched passage, murmurs*). No, no, my masters, ye cannot slay him! We hold him safe in our hearts . . . and we shall hear his voice . . . as he spake on the mountain . . . (*He rises and speaks as though vested with the authority of his master.*) . . . Love your enemies! Bless them that curse you . . . and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your father. . . . .

THE END



MARGARET OF SALEM





## THE CHARACTERS

MINISTER PARRIS, OF SALEM.

REBECCA NURSE, A WOMAN OF SALEM.

MARY EASTY, HER SISTER.

TITUBA, AN OLD INDIAN SLAVE OF PARRIS.

BETTY PARRIS, AGED NINE.

ABIGAIL WILLIAMS, AGED ELEVEN.

ANNE PUTNAM, AGED TWELVE.

MARY WALCOT, AGED SEVENTEEN.

ELIZABETH HUBBARD, AGED SEVENTEEN.

MARGARET SCOTT, AGED SEVENTEEN.

DR. GRIGGS, OF SALEM, UNCLE TO ELIZABETH AND  
MARGARET.

COTTON MATHER, MINISTER OF BOSTON.

ROBERT CALEF, OF BOSTON.

THOMAS PUTNAM, OF SALEM.

GOODWIFE MARTIN.

GOODWIFE BIBBER.

MARSHAL.

FIRST CONSTABLE.

SECOND CONSTABLE.

OLD CRONE.

MEN OF SALEM.

ACT I. THE LIVING-ROOM OF MINISTER PARRIS,  
SALEM.

ACT II. THE STUDY OF COTTON MATHER, BOS-  
TON.

ACT III. THE GRAVEYARD, SALEM.

ACT IV. CORRIDOR JUST OUTSIDE THE COURT-  
ROOM, SALEM.

ACT V. WAY LEADING TO GALLOWS HILL.



# MARGARET OF SALEM

## ACT I.

*The living-room or kitchen of the minister of Salem is rather dreary. In the center is a huge fireplace, with smouldering log fire. Over this hangs a black pot, simmering, which the old Indian woman, TITUBA, stirs occasionally. She wears nondescript drab clothes, but a bright red scarf is drawn over her black hair, and brass earrings dangle from her ears. She is quite old and feeble. When not tending the fire she spins at her wheel, to left of the fireplace. Beyond the wheel, back, is a door opening on a small, gray street. By the door is a stool, on which rests a poppet or rag doll.*

*At the right of the fireplace is a settle at right angles; beyond is a door leading into other chamber. In the right wall is a window; beside it, a rack, holding man's hat and cape.*

*Four girls are gathered together; their knitting lies about unheeded. They also wear the drab clothes of Puritanism, relieved by white cuffs, caps and kerchiefs. MARY WALCOT, the oldest, is seated on stool, by window. Her work lies untouched in her lap; her repose is rather sinister. BETTY PARRIS, the daughter of the house, a gay child of nine, is bending over TITUBA. ANNE PUTNAM, a wonder-eyed child of twelve, is sitting on hearth. ABIGAIL WILLIAMS, a cold-blooded little piece, BETTY'S cousin, is for the moment sitting demurely on settle, watching MINISTER PARRIS as he crosses the room to the outer door, accompanied by two women, MARY EASTY, an intelligent, middle-aged woman; and her sister, REBECCA NURSE, who is old and rather frail.*

PARRIS (*hard, cold, intolerant*). I tell thee, Mary Easty, thy words smack of impiety. The souls here in Salem are confided to my charge; and I shall deal rigorously with them—rigorously.

MARY EASTY (*mutters something suspiciously like, God help them! and turns to door.*)

REBECCA NURSE (*feeble in her walk, but not her spirit*). But sir, the poor old souls, Goodies Good and Osburn, are harmless bodies——

PARRIS (*with rebuke*). In the service of Satan they have devil's power.

REBECCA NURSE (*following her sister out of door, turns*). Minister of Salem, God's minister should believe in the all-power of God. (*She goes.*)

PARRIS (*calling after her*). Rebecca Nurse, Rebecca Nurse, the church shall deal with thee! The church shall deal——. (*He slams the door to, strides across room to rack near inner door, takes down his steeple hat and long black cape, and goes out of doors again, slamming the door violently behind him.*)

*The children resume their interrupted conversation.*

BETTY (*coaxingly, her arm about TITUBA'S neck*). Tituba, show me how—prithee, dear Tituba!

ANNE (*gleefully*). What tricks we could play! Think, in the meeting-house when your father, Betty, had given out the text, to make your voice come from way up in the air—and drown out the sermon!

BETTY. And not get punished for it!

ANNE. You could pretend you were the devil come to meeting.

BETTY. O Tituba, don't be tiresome; tell us, please!

TITUBA. Beware, beware, or the black man'll surely get ye! (*Her voice seems to come from distance.*)

BETTY and ABIGAIL run to door; ABIGAIL opens and peers out. *They are frightened.*

MARY (*without turning her head*). That was Tituba again.

BETTY (*relieved*). O how you scared me! (*Returning, she leans over* TITUBA.) Art sure, Tituba, thou'rt not a witch?

TITUBA. Tituba no witch, honey.

MARY. You must be, else you'd show us how you make your voice jump around so.

TITUBA. Eeveryone not able, but Missie Hubbard able.

BETTY (*clapping her hands*). Can Elizabeth do it? O goody! Goody!

ABIGAIL. Where is Elizabeth today? (*She closes door and returns.*)

ANNE. Her cousin, Margaret Scott, of Rowley's come to visit her.

MARY. Come to live with her, she told me. Dr. Griggs is guardian to both of 'em. She said she'd bring her cousin here today, and we could see if we wanted her—to join us.



ABIGAIL. What is she like? Hast seen her?

MARY. Rather timid—a lamb for Elizabeth's shepherding!

BETTY. O let us fright her! I shall throw a fit—even as she enters.

ANNE. And I shall read her palm—the way Tituba showed us. I speak to do it.

ABIGAIL (*brings forward a stool and sits near TITUBA; she sticks the poppet which was on the stool carelessly beneath*). I think we must be careful; if she's a tell-tale she might spoil everything.

MARY (*with conviction*). Elizabeth'll see to it she's no tell-tale.

BETTY. Perhaps she'll say it's witchcraft.

MARY. Perhaps it is.

BETTY. Bewitched? I—bewitched? (*laughs incredulously.*)

MARY (*seriously*). Elizabeth says she thinks so. (*She rises and goes to peer out of window.*)

BETTY. Not really? (*She follows MARY to window.*)

MARY. She saith that Goody Nurse hath looked upon you with an evil eye.

BETTY. Goody Nurse—oh no!

ABIGAIL (*making sure that the poppet is hid in her pocket under apron*). Where is thy poppet, Betty?

BETTY (*hunts with growing anxiety*). Oh, dost

think she took it? It was here near the door—Will she stick pins in it, and make me pine away?

MARY. She hath dared reprove me—ay and Elizabeth also, for things she had known nothing of had she not been a witch. She shall pay. I think that there be many witches here in Salem.

ABIGAIL (*who in pretended search for poppet has crossed to window*). There come Elizabeth and her cousin now!

BETTY. Let's see if we can scare her—just for fun! (*She crawls under settle.*) Cry, "Witch!" Cry, "Witch!"

ELIZABETH HUBBARD, *dark, handsome, sullen, enters with MARGARET SCOTT. ABIGAIL goes to meet them.*

ABIGAIL. Ah Elizabeth, is this your cousin?

ELIZABETH. This is my sweet cousin Margaret, of Rowley. (*With a wave of the hand.*) Abigail Williams, a cold-blooded piece! Anne Putnam, who manages us all! Mary Walcot, my particular gossip! But where is Betty?

BETTY (*from under settle*). Oh! Oh! I am bewitched!

ABIGAIL (*peering up at MARGARET*). O sweet maid, I've seen you at witches' gatherings o' dark nights.

MARY. You took the devil's sacrament at my side

ANNE. Do you not remember our long chats when we swept through the air on a broomstick?

MARGARET (*looks bewildered, then her face lights*

*with fun*). Well I remember it, but little I thought that the old hags I saw there were so young and fair.

Good Mistress Betty, Abigail, Anne and Mary, will ye admit me to your worshipful company? (*Sweeps a low courtesy.*)

ANNE. Can you do all that we do?

MARGARET. I can try. I can sing a song—and dance; but do not tell it.

ANNE. Sing a song! Sing a song—but low, so that none may hear it.

ABIGAIL. Thou understandest? Not a psalm—a song! I am aweary of psalms—and dance thereto! Tituba'll tell no tales.

ELIZABETH. Draw tight the curtain.

BETTY *draws curtain over window*. MARGARET *seizes BETTY'S hand and dances, and sings some little old ballad; the others join in the refrain as though trying to learn it.*

SONG: Old English.

“Summer is i' comen in; Loudly sing: Cuckoo!  
Groweth seed and bloweth mead  
And springeth the wood anew.  
Sing, Cuckoo-”

BETTY (*as the dance ends*). Well done, sweet maid; now tell me, canst call a spirit from the nether world?

MARGARET. Nay! Good Mistress Parris, canst thou?

BETTY. Yea, I can call—but alack, they do not answer. (*Both laugh.*)

ANNE. But there be who can do so.

MARGARET (*wistfully*). If it could be? I met one even now who knew my mother ere she died; she hath well-nigh conjured up her likeness, so sweet she spoke of her.

ELIZABETH. Pshaw, Margaret, she hath bewitched you.

MARY. What was her name?

MARGARET. Rebecca Nurse.

*There is an odd pause.*

ABIGAIL (*strangely*). Rebecca Nurse!

MARY. I knew she was a witch.

ANNE. Why Elizabeth, what ails thee?

ELIZABETH. It was Rebecca Nurse who carried false tales of me to Robert Calef—poisoned his mind against me, when he would have asked for me. I hate her.

MARGARET. Robert Calef—of Boston? He who speaks against witchcraft?

MARY. My sweet Elizabeth, that was a little dream. He never loved thee, else he would never have listened to any old woman's tale.

ELIZABETH. My *sweet* Mary, he did not listen to *any* old woman's tale—but Rebecca Nurse, by her devil's arts, turned him from me.

ABIGAIL. All her family have flouted us as though we were dirt beneath their feet—

ELIZABETH. They shall pay—*she* shall pay.



MARGARET. Sure thou'rt mistook—that frail old soul——

TITUBA. A witch don't need strength, honey.

MARY (*watching MARGARET closely*). You see, old Tituba's a witch in her own country and she hath taught us lots of queerish things.

MARGARET (*gazing at TITUBA with horror*). A witch!

TITUBA. Shall I read Missie's palm?

BETTY (*clapping her hands*). Marg'ret's afeard.

MARGARET (*lying*). I am not. (*She puts her hand in TITUBA'S.*)

TITUBA (*studies hand, hesitates*). Missie's hand hard to read; I cannot read it.

VOICE FROM WITHOUT. Tituba is a liar; heed her not.

*All look round startled, save TITUBA.*

TITUBA (*Reproachfully*). Missie Hubbard should not say such things.

BETTY (*gleefully*). Oh Elizabeth, was it thou? O if I could but do it! (*She practices.*) Tituba is a witch! Tituba is a witch!

O dear, my voice comes from right inside me.

*All practice, "Tituba is a witch" trying to throw their voices.*

TITUBA (*interrupts*). Sh! Sh! There's the master. (*She goes to door.*)

PARRIS (*outside*). This way, sir!



*At the sound of voices the girls have instantly formed a circle on the floor and are knitting industriously. ELIZABETH pulls MARGARET down beside her. PARRIS enters with DR. GRIGGS, who is portly, yet forbidding. The girls rise and courtesy respectfully. ABIGAIL brings chairs. TITUBA goes out of doors.*

PARRIS. Betty, come here; I would have Dr. Griggs examine you.

BETTY (*backs behind settle and glowers*). Oh, oh, I am afeard!

GRIGGS (*seating himself on chair opposite settle*). Nothing shall hurt thee, child. (*BETTY screams.*) How long has this been going on?

PARRIS (*standing at Griggs' left*). A month or more she hath had these fits, then suddenly recovered; Abigail also.

MARY (*courtesies*). We all have suffered from them, if it please you.

GRIGGS. Canst tell the cause, my child?

MARY. I cannot tell—unless it be——

GRIGGS. Witchcraft? (*MARY nods; GRIGGS wags his head thoughtfully.*) I fear me, Minister Parris, it is even so. I fear me there be witches here in Salem; for there be cases where my strongest remedies are of no avail.

PARRIS. I am of your opinion. There be several families—unbelievers. (*GRIGGS nods. PARRIS turns to BETTY.*) Listen, my child, canst thou tell me who afflicts thee?

BETTY. I know not, I——

ABIGAIL. I know! 'Tis Rebecca Nurse!

PARRIS' face lights up; he darts a keen glance at GRIGGS. TITUBA, who has gone out for firewood, returns and mends fire.

BETTY (*coming forward to GRIGGS' knee confidently*). She hath stole my poppet.

ELIZABETH (*calmly*). There be several women, uncle, who do afflict us, but I know not all their names—as yet. There's Goody Good and Goody Osburn, sir, and Rebecca Nurse——

MARGARET. Oh no, Elizabeth——

ELIZABETH. She is a witch.

MARY. Ay, ay, they be all witches.

ABIGAIL. When Betty had fits a dark nights, she hath screamed, Rebecca Nurse! Rebecca Nurse! Hurt me not I pray thee!

BETTY (*wondering*). Why Abigail, you never told me——

PARRIS (*takes hat and makes for door*). These women must be questioned.

TITUBA (*rising from hearth*). Master, master, these children be but playing, master.

PARRIS. Playing!!!

GRIGGS. Playing, woman!!!!

VOICE FROM WITHOUT. Tituba is a witch! She is a witch!

MARY. She hath taught me evil things——

ELIZABETH and ABIGAIL. And me! And me!

TITUBA. Tituba no witch, master. Nobody here witch!

ABIGAIL. You said you were one in your own country, Tituba!

TITUBA. Tituba witch in her own country; Tituba no witch here.

VOICE FROM WITHOUT. Tituba is a witch.

PARRIS (*grasps her shoulder with heavy hand*). Confess, woman! There may be mercy yet.

TITUBA (*crouching low*). Tituba poor old Indian woman. Other women witches! Tituba no witch.

PARRIS. What other women? Tell the truth woman, or thou shalt be whipped.

TITUBA (*dazed*). Those they say.

PARRIS. Name them. (TITUBA *looks up helplessly*.) Goody Good?

TITUBA (*obediently*). Goody Good.

PARRIS. Goody Osburn?

TITUBA. Goody Osburn.

PARRIS. Rebecca Nurse?

TITUBA. Rebecca Nurse.

PARRIS. And you? Confess. Those who confess shall win mercy.

MARY. You know you really *are* a witch, Tituba.

BETTY (*cries*).

TITUBA (*wavering*). Tituba witch in her own country——

GRIGGS (*impatiently*). Come, come, out with it!

TITUBA. Tituba no know; maybe Tituba witch here. (*She subsides by fireplace.*)

PARRIS (*to GRIGGS*). Send for the constable to take her in charge; the other women also. (*GRIGGS turns to go.*)

MARGARET (*touching his sleeve*). But uncle, this is—is this not all a—a jest? These children do not mean aught——

GRIGGS (*furiously*). A jest? A jest, girl? Think you I am deceived? Is it a jest that these poor wenches are tormented, thrown into spasms, yea, most grievously afflicted?

Meddle not, Margaret, mark me well, meddle not, I say.

ELIZABETH (*putting her arm about MARGARET*). Good uncle, Mr. Parris, heed her not, I prithee. She hath met with Rebecca Nurse this very hour. She is the worse bewitched of any. Come, dear heart. (*She seeks to lead MARGARET away.*)

MARGARET (*struggling*). But——

GRIGGS. Hold thy tongue, and go! (*Points sternly to door; MARGARET goes.*) (*To PARRIS.*) I shall take my nieces to the Reverend Mr. Mather of Boston. He hath studied the ways of witchcraft and men say that in his presence the devil hath no power.

PARRIS. Do so—Peace, child.

BETTY. Oh! Oh! (*She snatches her poppet from*



ABIGAIL'S *pocket.*) But 'tis my poppet. Thou had'st it all the time, thou minx!

Father, old Rebecca Nurse did not afflict me, for she did not have my poppet to stick pins in. She is no witch after all.

ABIGAIL *stifles a laugh.* ANNE *looks solemn eyed.* GRIGGS and PARRIS *frown.*

PARRIS (*in exasperation*). Betty, pack up thy things to go a-visiting. Tomorrow thou leavest Salem. (BETTY *turns weeping.*)

CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

*Study of Cotton Mather, Boston.*

*Door and fireplace are in same relative position as in Act I, but there is a table center right, and chairs against wall, primly set, at back. On the mantel and table are many books; on latter, a quill pen, inkstand. COTTON MATHER is seated at his desk, writing. He rises, goes to mantel, consults book, then paces to and fro, declaiming his sermon.*

MATHER. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that his time is short; for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath——!

Now is the word fulfilled among you—now!

For brethren, the devil is very nigh unto us, whispering in each ear that will listen, bidding us sell our souls for mortal gain.

Not only in Salem doth this great plague of witchcraft fester sorely, but I have seen Satan here



in God's town of Boston, raging through the streets, seeking whom he may devour.

Yea, to deny witchcraft is to deny Holy Writ, which says explicit: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." (*Knock on door; MATHER opens.*)

What, Dr. Griggs? Welcome, sir!

GRIGGS *enters.*

GRIGGS. Do I intrude, Mr. Mather?

MATHER. No, no, I was but developing my sermon. (*Pulls forward chair.*) Tell me of Salem? How goes it with the poor maids there?

GRIGGS (*seating himself*). It goes ill.

MATHER. The will of Heaven be done!

GRIGGS. More like the will of Hell! A bad business, Mr. Mather, a bad business! Four witches have been found, but who can tell how many more there be, going about clad in the garb of righteousness—that is, in so far as a woman may be righteous.

MATHER. Four, you say? The Indian woman and Goodwives Good and Osburn—?

GRIGGS. 'Also—Rebecca Nurse.

MATHER. Rebecca Nurse!

Alas that a life of good, yea, pious deeds should not be a complete armour 'gainst the devil!

GRIGGS. Her good life is a snare and a delusion.

Mr. Mather, I, as physician, certify to you, those five children are most grievously afflicted; if not by the devil in these women's forms—then in God's name, by whom?

MATHER. By whom, indeed? The devil surely

taketh these women's shapes; yet the women may still be virtuous——

GRIGGS (*hastily*). How's that? How's that?

MATHER. If they confess—seek a state of grace——

GRIGGS (*triumphantly*). But they do *not* confess—and the children suffer torments. Maybe I speak hotly, sir, but my niece, Elizabeth Hubbard is one of them, and all my skill cannot cure her.

MATHER. It lieth not in thy province, worthy sir, but be of cheer; He who banished the devils at Gadara will surely aid.

GRIGGS. In matters spiritual thou art physician. I have brought her here. Pray over her, Mr. Mather; exorcise these devils. And hark'ee, I—there's another minx—you remember Scott? Him who married Mary?

MATHER (*his brow darkening*). That god-forsaken man who plead for Quakers and for toleration? I knew him well at one time; he is dead.

GRIGGS. His daughter dwells with me; and if Elizabeth hath seven devils, Margaret hath seven times seven.

MATHER. The sins of the father, how should she escape! Bring them——

GRIGGS. That will I, Mr. Mather, and gladly. (*Goes to door, opens and calls.*) 'Lizabeth! Meg! Where are ye, wenches?

ELIZABETH (*without, cries*). I will not enter! I will not! I know Mr. Mather; he is a man of God. I will not go into his room.

MATHER *springs forward and assists* GRIGGS *to lead* ELIZABETH *into room. She tries to strike him but her hand seemingly recoils from touching him.*

MARGARET *follows slowly with chin held high.*

MATHER. Poor child! Poor child!

ELIZABETH (*drawing a long breath*). The devils are gone from me; at thy touch, sir, they went. They say, God won't let 'em in here.

MATHER (*tenderly*). What devils did afflict you?

ELIZABETH. It was Goody Nurse! It was Goody Nurse.

MARGARET. No! (*She catches her breath as though to recall words.*)

MATHER (*looks at her attentively, then turns to GRIGGS*). Leave them for th' hour; I'll pray to God.

GRIGGS. God speed you. (*He turns to go.*)

MATHER. A word with you. (*He passes into hall with GRIGGS.*)

ELIZABETH (*as soon as they are alone*). You do mad me, Margaret, you're such a fool. What is Rebecca Nurse to you?

MARGARET. Old—frail—falsely accused.

ELIZABETH (*plaintively*). Margaret! And you know how I suffer because of her!

MARGARET. Thou! Thou hast not conscience enough to suffer. O Elizabeth, give over—give over crying "Witch" on those ye hate! (*ELIZABETH shrugs.*) Then shall I tell Mr. Mather all—all; I will betray your secrets to him—

ELIZABETH. Do so—and we cry “Witch” on thee.

MARGARET (*her face paling*). Thou wouldst not—and I—I am no witch.

ELIZABETH (*laughs*). They all say that. (*A pause in which MARGARET first sees her danger.*) All they that are not for me are against me.

MARGARET (*passionately*). Then I—I—am against thee, against thee, against thee——

MATHER (*entering*). Foul fiend, thou shalt not prevail! (*Takes MARGARET’S hand.*) Can this be the daughter of Mary Scott? I knew thy mother, child.

MARGARET (*tremulously*). O sir, if you knew my mother, if you felt aught of kindness toward her, send me hence. Get me sent back to Rowley, or anywhere I may earn my bread, away from Salem, away——

MATHER (*kindly*). My child, wouldst flee the devil so? The devil is everywhere.

ELIZABETH (*horrified*). Not here? Not in this godly room?

MATHER. Yea, even here I have fought the devil oft. For this it is exposes man to Satan’s wrath, that man should seek to do the will of God.

MARGARET (*shyly*). And must one suffer then for doing good?

MATHER. Ay, child, for Satan knoweth his time is short.

MARGARET (*hesitating*). I have heard it said



the—the devil was no person but just wickedness inside us—

MATHER (*frowning*). Whence got you that doctrine—from the devil—or Robert Calef?

MARGARET. I—I heard Mr. Calef speak once—with—with my father, ere he died.

MATHER. There is indeed need for prayer; let us kneel down. (*Kneels at GRIGGS' chair in center. Prays.*) Almighty God—

MARGARET *kneels at table at right*, ELIZABETH *draws on hood and starts for door*.

ELIZABETH. Satan is whispering in my ear; Satan is whispering in my ear! I may not kneel, I won't, I won't, I tell you!

MATHER (*continues praying, turning slightly toward ELIZABETH*).—be with this maid; free her from Satan's power! Christ Jesus, cast the devils out of her, as at Gadara!

ELIZABETH (*returns and kneels on MATHER'S left, saying sweetly*). The devil is gone; thy words have driven him away—like a little yellow bird he flew away.

MATHER. O Lord, thy mercy is from everlasting. Be with this other maid in whom the devil hath sowed tares as doubts, that she doth call in question the wisdom of her fathers. Be present with them that they sign no devil's book—

ELIZABETH *looks up furtively; her lips move but the words come from without*.

VOICE. Sign the book! Sign the book! And thine shall be the kingdoms of this world and all the power and glory—



MARGARET *glances scornfully at ELIZABETH across MATHER'S back.*

MATHER (*speaking with greater energy*). Thou devil's voice—get thee behind me! For *thine*, O Lord, shall be the kingdom and the power and glory, world without end! And all the scoffers, whoremongers—God—that a soul should sell itself to the devil! For wealth or pleasure here, sign the devil's book!

VOICE. Sign the book! Sign the book!

MATHER (*rising*). Avaunt! I will not sign it, no, not I!

Lord, strengthen thou mine hand. Here to my sermon which I preach tomorrow before all Boston, here I set my mark.

(*He goes to the desk. MARGARET is crouching low, regarding him with horror. ELIZABETH'S face is buried in her hands.*)

No devil's document do I sign; I set my name to th' exposition of the word of God. (*Signs sermon and straightens with relief.*)

Thank God the tempter is gone—; (*Knock.*)—he was a shadow.

Lord, I tend my sheep, but there be those who have gone astray—unbelievers, in whom the prince of this world hath darkened their eyes—let thy curse be upon them and scatter them—

ROBERT CALEF *enters. He carries a roll of parchment.*

CALEF. Curses are devil's words, Cotton Mather.

*The girls rise and draw back to right. Mather stays back of table.*

MATHER. Robert Calef? What do you here, Robert Calef?

CALEF. Mr. Mather, I am the bearer of a petition to the magistrates, which, knowing your genuine kindness, I have fair hopes you will sign.

MATHER. Its purport, sir?

CALEF. In behalf of one poor woman, falsely accused.

MATHER. Her name?

CALEF. Rebecca Nurse.

ELIZABETH. Oh! Oh! Oh save me, Mr. Calef! She is standing just behind you—all in chains—protect me, sir. (*She seizes his hand which he yields reluctantly.*)

MATHER. Peace, child! (*To CALEF.*) She is one of the afflicted children.

CALEF (*grimly*). I have met with Mistress Hubbard; I can guess how much she is afflicted.

ELIZABETH (*greatly enjoying herself*). She pincheth me—yea, she torments me. (*CALEF drops her hand.*)

MATHER. You see, sir, with your eyes how she is hurt.

CALEF (*contemptuously*). She should be whipped.

ELIZABETH (*darts him an angry glance and turns to MATHER*). Mr Mather, put out your arm. (*MATHER takes her hand.*) Ah! (*With relief.*) She is flown!

MATHER. Oblige me, sir, by leaving, lest you do this child more harm; your lingering here is fruitless. (*He still holds ELIZABETH'S hand.*)

CALEF. You will not sign? The woman is a saint on earth.

VOICE (*outside.*) Sign the book! Sign the book!

MATHER *turns startled.* *The eyes of CALEF and MARGARET meet and agree.*

MATHER. Ah, I understand now the wherefore of the temptation; here is my answer which I preach tomorrow. (*Points to sermon.*)

CALEF (*beginning to lose his temper*). You are possessed yourself, Mr. Mather. Take those afflicted children; whip 'em well, and we'll hear less o' witchcraft.

I grant you sincere, Minister of Boston, but this delusion must cease——

MATHER. Sir——

CALEF. For men will tolerate it not much longer.

MATHER. Sir, only those deny the devil who are possessed.

CALEF. Pshaw. (*Turns away.*)

MATHER. If there be no devil, there is no God.

CALEF. You will not sign to save one poor old woman?

MATHER. No.

CALEF. It has been signed by many brave men; it is their protest of courage and truth and enlightenment. For the last time, will you not sign it?

MATHER. No!

CALEF *turns to door.*

MARGARET (*advancing center*). O sir, say that again! (*To CALEF.*)

CALEF (*turning*). Say what, Mistress?

MARGARET. All that ending with "Pshaw!"

CALEF (*smiling*). Faith, have I won a disciple—in Mr. Mather's household?

MATHER. Margaret, leave the room!

MARGARET (*to CALEF*). Is it really true—I mean that there be no devil and no witches?

MATHER. Go, sir, go—and let me tell you, no man of *my* congregation shall dare sign your petition.

MARGARET. Mr. Calef—I am only a woman—but—may I sign?

MATHER. I forbid it; you are mad.

CALEF *slowly spreads petition out on table, dips pen in ink and offers it, keeping his eyes fixed on her.*

MARGARET (*takes pen and turns to MATHER*). I will not be coward longer. I have been half crazed with fear, believing as you believe, but at the first breath of truth I know it. I do not believe in witches or the devil; I do not believe in powers of darkness. (*She draws a long breath and signs.*)

ELIZABETH (*looking at her with horror*). Avoid! Avoid! In the name of God, avoid.

O Mr. Mather, Mr. Mather, a little bird is whispering in her ear, a little yellow bird—I am afeard. (*She runs shrieking from room.*)

MATHER (*to CALEF*). Begone! You have done mischief enough. (*He hastens after ELIZABETH.*)



CALEF (*slowly folding petition*). Mistress, I repent me of this day's work.

MARGARET. Ah, not I!

CALEF (*kindly*). I fear me you do not see——

MARGARET. I have seen it long, but dared not face it—till now. Now I am free. Free for the first time since my father died, and I was sent to Salem.

CALEF. Salem is no place for you.

MARGARET (*drearily*). Salem is a small gray prison.

CALEF. Must you go back?

MARGARET. I have nowhere else to go; yet maybe now my uncle'll not receive me.

CALEF. I must see you again.

MARGARET (*smiling*). Your name is Anathema Maranatha in Dr. Griggs's house.

CALEF. Still I must see you. Where can we meet in safety?

MARGARET. There's no place but the graveyard—or gallow's hill.

CALEF (*making a wry face*). What matter?

MARGARET (*laughing oddly*). The only free spot in Salem is the graveyard, the only safe spot in Salem!

CALEF (*eagerly*). Three days hence?

MARGARET. At sunseting.  
I'm no light maid, sir, but I would hear more of



your teachings—you understand, do you not?—I mean that there be no witches and no devil; he seems so real at times.

CALEF. I understand. Fare thee well, Mistress; keep thy heart merry, and let the devil take—the devil. (*He smiles, bows and goes.*)

MATHER and GRIGGS brush past him coming in.

MATHER. Here is the maid. (*To MARGARET.*) Fast and pray—fast and pray! for I see the devils fighting for possession.

GRIGGS. My wench, “Haeresis est maxima, maxima, opera maleficarum non credere.”

CURTAIN.

### ACT III.

*The graveyard of Salem.*

*Between audience and stage, a few pine trees, mostly bare at base, silhouette blackly against sky. Late sunset, changing to night. A few dark pine trees stand out against the sunset.*

MARGARET is lying prone on the ground. A great bell tolls at intervals. She rises quickly as CALEF enters.

MARGARET. Robert! Thou shouldst not have come hither again. Once was too much and this is now many times.

CALEF. What would you? One meeting for the disciple—but many more for the maid. (*He takes her in his arms but presently she draws away.*)

MARGARET. O Robert, that first day when I

came—was it so short a time ago?—I came fearlessly, for I came to meet a teacher—a master——

CALEF. And found—a man.

MARGARET. And now—it can be so no longer. (*They pace to and fro.*)

CALEF. Thou art right; thou must come away. Thou shalt give me the right to take thee away.

MARGARET. Whither? To Boston? (CALEF *nods.*) Ah, I fear Boston nigh as much as Salem. Mr. Mather lives in Boston

CALEF. *Mather!* Thou dost not fear *him*?

MARGARET (*shivering*). I—fear him. (*The bell tolls.*)

Ah, that bell! It hath tolled the livelong day. They have hanged her, Rebecca Nurse, the poor old soul; for a witch they have hanged her, with the other four—and I feel the guilt of all upon me.

CALEF (*sharply*). Rouse thee; thou art distraught.

MARGARET. I am a coward. I hate myself—but it is so. Why were they hanged, tell me, why were they hanged?

CALEF. Not through thy witness, but because of thy cousin Elizabeth and the other lying wenches.

MARGARET. And I—was silent. I was afraid—afraid to go against them and say they lied.

CALEF. You spoke, yea and bravely, in behalf of Rebecca Nurse.

MARGARET. Weakly and like a coward—once.

CALEF (*decisively*). Margaret, this must cease.

You must be got away from Salem. I will take you to the southward, to the Dutch at the Manhatoes where there's freedom——

MARGARET. Hark! Dost thou hear a murmur?

CALEF. 'Tis the pine trees. Or we could go together to the frontiers? Leave Boston for the devil to roam in and seek God in the wilderness? Eh, Margaret?

MARGARET. And the banns? My uncle'll not consent.

CALEF (*snapping his fingers*). That for his consent! I'll find a way——

MARGARET. I fear for thee; thou art passionate and he hates thee. And Mr. Mather hates thee also.

CALEF. I am indifferent so that thou lovest me.

MARGARET. At first—thou wert as light shining in darkness——

CALEF. And then——?

MARGARET. Then thou wert *just*—Robert Calef. (*She smiles suddenly up at him.*)

CALEF. Just Robert Calef—but possessed by twenty thousand devils when he thinks of how they have browbeaten you.

Come, dear one, we'll go together; I'll have it out with the Doctor.

MARGARET (*shrinking*). Ah no, no, not tonight! Tomorrow—when the sunshine's bright and clear.

CALEF. But I must leave tonight for Boston and beyond—may be a week 'ere I can see thee.

MARGARET. Maybe *then*—the darkness will have lifted.

CALEF (*teasingly*). Thou fearest the darkness?

MARGARET. Do not—tease me. Tell me there's naught to fear.

CALEF (*promptly*). There's naught to fear.

MARGARET. A lie!

Where there is love is there not always fear for the loved one?

CALEF (*soberly*). God knows there is, Margaret. There be no powers of hell or of darkness; but while there is hate or ignorance there is fear.

MARGARET. Fear? Hate? These be powers of darkness enough.

CALEF. They shall not touch thee. Ah, Margaret, I love thee! In love is strength and courage and great might.

MARGARET. Is there a perfect love which casts out fear?

CALEF. Fear for self—yes!

MARGARET. I spoke not of fear for self—what are those shadows? (*She speaks the last words almost under her breath, breaks off and stares into distance, then turns to him.*) Thou must go, Robert, go!

CALEF. Nay, I'll come with thee tonight; it's growing late.

MARGARET (*in a passion of entreaty*). No, no, prithee go! Thou must not—I'll not be seen with thee——



CALEF. Then promise me—get thee home to bed, away from all these vapours. When I return, when the sun shines bright and clear, I'll come for thee in the face of all Salem. Promise me, dear one.

MARGARET. I promise thee. (*He goes. She gazes after him dreamily.*) Where there is love—we fear for those we love. He must not—be seen with me. 'Twould work him injury. (*She starts, and again searches distance.*)

*Faint song in distance growing stronger as singer approaches.*

SONG: Old English.

“Summer is i' comen in; Loudly sing: Cuckoo!  
Groweth seed and bloweth mead  
And springeth the wood anew.  
Sing. . . .

*The song breaks off abruptly and a voice calls.*

VOICE OF ANNE PUTNAM. Who's there? Who's there? Avoid!

ANNE PUTNAM *enters, followed slowly by ELIZABETH.* *It is now fully dark.*

MARGARET. Is it thou, Anne?

ANNE. O Margaret! O thou did'st fright me!  
What art doing?

O Margaret, art thou a witch?

MARGARET. A witch? Thou knowest I be none.

ANNE (*doubtfully*). I know not. Elizabeth and the others say thou be'st.

MARGARET. Have I tormented thee, sweet Anne?

ANNE. N—no—o. How should I know? I



never see them that torment me. Elizabeth and Mary—they tell me.

But what wast doing, Margaret—here alone in the night—if thou be'st no witch?

ELIZABETH (*slowly*). Ay, what wast doing? (MARGARET *is silent*.) Anne, prithee stand yonder and warn us ere they come. (ANNE *goes*.)

MARGARET. They?

ELIZABETH. Thou art accused

MARGARET. By thee?

ELIZABETH (*uneasily*). By all of us. Thou hast left us no choice.

MARGARET. No choice?

Go to the Justice and say ye lied; five poor old women are hanged, though innocent. Or, if ye fear to bear your own deeds' burden, say that ye erred, but now ye see the truth.

ELIZABETH (*sullenly*). 'Tis too late; we may not eat our words.

MARGARET (*with growing excitement*). Five have ye hanged and yet ye say ye had no choice. And when five more are hanged, what then? Will ye go on accusing?

ELIZABETH. Till I have paid my scot.

Margaret, thou dost not know Salem, the mean women's tongues, the hardness of men. Two years since—'twas naught I did—mere folly, but the good folk of Salem cried out upon me; they shall pay! Devils in women's garb!

MARGARET. And so thou hast accused me—thy cousin. Elizabeth, thou canst not mean it. Why—our mothers were sisters; we are near of kin.

ELIZABETH. Listen Margaret, I still may save thee, if thou—who was he that was here tonight? Was it Robert Calef? Answer me! Was he Robert Calef? (MARGARET *faces her stubbornly.*) Ah, it *was* he then. And these three times past? The dumb devils have got thee sure enough.

MARGARET. What is it to thee?

ELIZABETH. This it is to me—I hate him! He dares to stand against us—and he hath power. He hath bewitched thee; thou must swear to it.

MARGARET. Thou shalt not injure Robert Calef; thou shalt not! Shalt not!

ELIZABETH. 'Tis since thou mettest with him thou hast fallen away from us.

Cousin, come back to us; be not so strange!

MARGARET (*passionately*). I was never with you, never! Nor am I kin to you! Not though our mothers were sisters a thousand times!

ANNE *runs in.*

'ANNE. There is a twinkle of lights near Mr. Sewall's.

ELIZABETH (*feigning great agitation*). Help me, Anne, lest I faint! Away! Away! (*The two girls hasten away to right.*)

MARGARET *looks about her despairingly, takes a few steps after them. At the same moment a lanthorn's rays steal in from right.*

VOICES. This way!  
The maids said they heard strange noises.

CONSTABLE, THOMAS PUTNAM *and other men enter. They hold up lanthorns.*

PUTNAM. Ah! Aroint thee, witch! (*All cross thumb and forefinger.*)

MARGARET (*piteously*). Do you mean me?  
Surely, sirs, ye know I be no witch.

CONSTABLE (*clapping hand on her shoulder*). I arrest thee in the name of the commonwealth of Massachusetts; charged with the detestable act of witchcraft.

PUTNAM. Who was here with you—whom the maids heard? Was it Satan, your master? Speak!

ANOTHER MAN. Speak! If 'twas a man—and he of Salem, we'll lesson him.

ANOTHER MAN. Witch!

ANOTHER MAN. We'll hang him up beside thee.

ANOTHER MAN. 'A flew off like a bat; I saw him go.

*The men speak confusedly, some together.*

MARGARET. I—I—O sirs, I am just a maid; I hold no converse with devils. (*Breaks off and runs to GRIGGS who enters slowly and gravely.*) O Uncle, Uncle, they call me "Witch!" They call me "Witch!" And thou knowest I be none.

GRIGGS (*gravely*). Hast thou not given them reason?

A MAN. Aye, that she hath, sir! She hath stolen here to talk with her familiar!

ANOTHER MAN. Woman o' Babylon!

GRIGGS. Grant me to speak one moment apart with her.

CONSTABLE. Thou canst not banish the devil, Doctor. He's too strong for ye.

*The men draw apart from MARGARET and GRIGGS, and converse in low tones.*

GRIGGS. My child, Elizabeth hath told me how thou art in the power of this man, Robert Calef. Go now with me and swear against him before witnesses and thou art free.

MARGARET. Thou too? (*She draws stiffly away.*)

GRIGGS. If he have a spark of manhood in him he will come forward and avow these meetings. He should bear the brunt of this.

MARGARET (*with slow anger*). And if he doth, I shall deny it.

GRIGGS (*losing his temper and grasping her shoulder, shaking her*). That thou shalt not.

MARGARET: Aye, but I *will!*

GRIGGS (*throwing her from him*). If thou hast so fallen under Robert Calef's influence, it is meet that thy body suffer. (*To CONSTABLE.*)

Take her, sir constable; witches must perish.

CONSTABLE (*placing his hand on her shoulder*). Come, maid, away!

*All turn and go, the ianthorn's rays gradually leaving all in darkness.*

CURTAIN.



## ACT IV.

*The anteroom or corridor between door and courtroom.*

*In the center of a putty-colored wall is a large double door; one constable, with leather corselet, leather boots, broad sash, helmet and pike, guards the door. The small doors at right and left lead respectively out of doors, and to the small room where prisoners await trial. Bench against right wall.*

*A few old crones are clustered about door, trying to enter. They are clad in the usual dingy garb. Red cloaks were probably taboo among the "Brethren," but they add greatly to the effectiveness of the scene.*

*A second constable enters room through the great door. The women surge forward. CONSTABLE planks himself before right side.*

SECOND CONSTABLE (*pushing them back*). Back! Back, I tell you! Room's crowded to the full. (*Women fall back.*)

FIRST CONSTABLE (*at left side*). No standing room, much less a seat, Mother.

SECOND CONSTABLE (*grins*). Unless thou be'st a witch and can sit on rafter. (*A crone on his side tries to slip under his arm.*) Back, woman, back!

OLD CRONE (*at right of door*). I, a witch? Nay, nay! Many a time the devil's come to me to sign a paper wi' him, saying I should be queen o' hell, but I wouldna', I wouldna'.

Rather this ragged petticoat than silk o' the devil's purchase!

SECOND CONSTABLE. Well, Mary Easty, within there, she never wore devil's clothes, neither. Hark'ee! (*Puts ear to crack.*)



GOODY BIBBER (*at left of door*). Ay, but the other minx they try today, Margaret, she went dressed like a maypole on a village green. I've seen her. (*Other women nod assent.*)

GOODY MARTIN (*at left of GOODY BIBBER, to CONSTABLE*). Have they condemned her? Is Mary Easty condemned?

SECOND CONSTABLE (*listening*). Ay, they've condemned her. Nay—sh! (*He opens door a crack so that MARY EASTY'S voice is heard.*)

MARY EASTY. “—petition your honors, not for my own life, for I know I must die, but if it be possible that no more innocent blood may be shed, which cannot be avoided in the way you go in—I would humbly beg of your honours that you would be pleased to examine the afflicted persons strictly and apart, and I question not but that the Lord will give a blessing to your endeavours.”

*The SECOND CONSTABLE leaves door and goes to side room on right, whence he reappears leading MARGARET SCOTT. MARY EASTY enters from court room, led by MARSHAL. The women fall back in silence before her, the old crone to right, the other women to left. MARY EASTY and MARGARET meet in center.*

MARY EASTY (*to MARGARET*). Bless thee, my child!

MARGARET. Thou art condemned?

MARY EASTY. Ay, child! But for my sister's sake, I bless thee. Thou did'st dare speak for my sister, Rebecca Nurse.

MARGARET (*in a dull, tired voice*). But she is

hanged for a witch—as thou and I shall be—and many, many more.

And all the while there be no witches.

MARSHAL (*surrendering MARY EASTY to CONSTABLE and taking MARGARET*). Peace! Peace! (*The women try to slip into court room; he pushes them roughly aside.*) Make way, old hags! (*He leads MARGARET into court; the SECOND CONSTABLE takes MARY EASTY out, then returns.*)

CRONE (*as door shuts in her face*). May the foul fiend seize him!

FIRST CONSTABLE (*peeking*). Sh! Sh! They re opening wi' prayer. (*He opens door a crack.*)

PRAYER (*heard indistinctly*). O thou *Hope of New England*—look mercifully down upon this court. Let *Satan be bruised*, Lord, beneath our feet, and let the covenanted vassals of Satan be *gloriously conquered* by thy *gracious presence* in the midst of us.

(*The women kneel during prayer.*)

All (*within and without*) Amen!

GOODY BIBBER (*in a loud whisper*). Are they all there—the afflicted children?

FIRST CONSTABLE. Ay!

GOODY BIBBER. The prisoner was one of them, warn't she?

CRONE. Yea, but 'a hath a dumb devil.

GOODY MARTIN. What's goin' on there?

FIRST CONSTABLE (*turns to women and winks*). She saith she is not guilty.

GOODY MARTIN. They all say that.

SECOND CONSTABLE. She hath not the look of a witch.

CRONE. How like a man! Because she's fair to look on! Don't 'ee know the devil always has his way wi' such?

SECOND CONSTABLE. Why doth he oftenest choose old crones like you, then?

CRONE (*laughing shrilly*). Bless the man! The devil never chooses us old bodies; we're no use to him. 'Tis his black art. He throws suspicion on the aged to protect his lambs.

SECOND CONSTABLE *shrugs*. FIRST CONSTABLE, *who has kept his ear to crack, motions for silence. All draw nearer.*

GOODY BIBBER. How goes it? Tell us.

FIRST CONSTABLE. Poor wenches! Poor afflicted children! 'Tis a most grievous sight. Look you, when the witch doth but move her head, the children must waggle theirs. What'er she doth, they are afflicted so they must do likewise.

CRONE (*pushing forward*). Let me see!

*The CONSTABLES, placing their pikes across door to forbid entrance, allow the women to peek in turn. As each makes room for the next, she wags her head sadly.*

CRONE. It is her master Satan in her body. I know! I know!

GOODY BIBBER (*to CRONE*). Poor Mistress Hubbard! My heart bleeds for her. She seemeth the worst afflicted.

FIRST CONSTABLE (*peeking again*). Sh! women—sh! (*After a pause.*) They ask her who was wi'

her i' th' graveyard, if 'twas not her master the devil? She doth not speak, nor even open mouth.

SECOND CONSTABLE (*knowingly*). She hath scarce answered them a single word save to say she was not guilty.

GOODY BIBBER (*to CRONE*). Still the dumb devil?

GOODY MARTIN (*peeks, then turns back*). Ah, the poor young maiden—wi' all against her!

*Slowly all present turn and look at GOODY MARTIN.*

GOODY MARTIN (*advancing and speaking uneasily*). Nay, gossips, one may pity even a witch.

GOODY BIBBER (*virtuously drawing a little away*). As for me, I keep my pity for the afflicted children, who are most horribly beaten and tormented, yea even made to faint by this horrid witch.

SECOND CONSTABLE (*at crack*). One hath fainted even now. Make way! Make way! They bring her out for air.

*In the bustle that follows, the MARSHAL enters, supporting ELIZABETH to bench against right wall. ABIGAIL follows. The MARSHAL returns to court room and door is shut. The women draw near ELIZABETH.*

CRONE (*bending over ELIZABETH*). Eh, dearie, did the black witch hurt thee, dearie?

ABIGAIL. How is it with thee, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH (*faintly*). Where am I? Oh! She stranglenth me! She will not have me witness against her. (*Women rub her hands and head.*)



FIRST CONSTABLE (*looking through door*). Now they have bound her hands.

ELIZABETH (*breathing rapidly and rising*). Ah, now I am well! She cannot torment me now.

CRONE. The horrid witch. There dearie, lean on me.

ELIZABETH. Since we came from Boston she hath not ceased to torment me. She hath not ceased to torment me since in Boston she met wi' Robert Calef.

SECOND CONSTABLE (*in surprise*). Robert Calef!!!

ELIZABETH (*briefly*). He hath a devil.

SECOND CONSTABLE (*smiling*). No, no, mistress! Robert Calef mixeth not in these affairs.

ELIZABETH (*eyeing the CONSTABLE*). Robert Calef hath a devil.

*The WOMEN draw to right of ELIZABETH.*

SECOND CONSTABLE (*uneasily*). Can it be.

ELIZABETH (*holding up her hand for silence*). He was by her side a-whispering in her ear—I saw him—bidding her not betray that it was he who taught her devil's dealings.

FIRST CONSTABLE. Is that the reason why she will not speak?

ELIZABETH. Yea, in the devil's own likeness he stood by her.

*There is a clatter of hoofs without; all turn toward door on left.*



SECOND CONSTABLE. Some one rides in haste.

ELIZABETH (*with premonition, cries*). It is Calef! Robert Calef!

CALEF *enters hastily, splashed from hard riding. The CONSTABLES and WOMEN look at ELIZABETH with awe.*

CONSTABLES. Lord ha' mercy!

CALEF (*to CONSTABLES*). Let me pass! (*The CONSTABLES draw together in front of the door.*)

FIRST CONSTABLE. The room is full, Mr. Calef.

CALEF. I have the Governor's permit.

ELIZABETH (*advancing*). The room is full.

CALEF (*paying no attention to her*). Look you, I am come hither in Mistress Scott's defence. Do ye not honor the Governor's name here in this town of Salem? Let me pass!

*The CONSTABLES look uneasy as CALEF forces the paper upon them.*

SECOND CONSTABLE. I have orders from the Justice, Mr. Calef——

ELIZABETH (*seizes the paper, studies it, then drops it as though it burnt her*). This is the devil's mark—not the Governor's!

*The CONSTABLES and WOMEN back hastily away.*

CALEF. Wilt take a message?

SECOND CONSTABLE (*relieved*). Ay, that will I, Mr. Calef.

CALEF *scribbles on paper which SECOND CONSTABLE takes within.*

ELIZABETH (*laughs*). Even the devil cannot save her now, Mr. Calef.

SECOND CONSTABLE (*returning*). The Justice says, Mr. Calef, the prisoner is permitted no defence—and the room is full.

CALEF (*making for door*). Stand aside, fellows!

CONSTABLES (*forcing him back*). Nay, sir, the room is crowded sir!

The Justice bade us restrain you, sir. (*They speak together.*)

CALEF. Is it the beginning or—the end?

SECOND CONSTABLE. The end.

ELIZABETH. The end of the trial of Margaret Scott—on which shall follow the trial of—Robert Calef.

CALEF (*faces her, eyes her for a moment, then deliberately laughs*). Try it, Mistress!

ELIZABETH *retreats before him.*

*There is a sound of outcries within, then a hush. CALEF flings himself against one CONSTABLE, throws him aside, then struggles with the other, who stands with back squarely against door. CALEF is repulsed. All stand waiting a moment in silence, then the CONSTABLE stoops and listens; he opens door a crack. Cries from within. Witch! Witch! Aroint thee!*

SECOND CONSTABLE. They have condemned her. Now you shall see her, sir. They lead her out

this way. (*To WOMEN who are again crowding forward.*) Away there, you!

*The door is thrown open. The MARSHAL enters with MARGARET in irons, followed by GRIGGS, PARRIS, PUTNAM, who stay back, and ANNE and MARY, who move down front, left. ABIGAIL circles around back to join them.*

CALEF. Mistress—(*MARGARET raises her head dazedly and looks at him as though at a stranger.*)—if there be common law in Massachusetts, if there be any justice in this people, this trial, where no defence is allowed the accused, shall not go unchallenged.

PARRIS. Silence, man! The common law is for common times; but in these times of stress and turmoil, the law, like all things else, must bow to necessity.

CALEF. Is it true? Is it true? Shall it be true of this new land? Shall Justice be a thing wrapped in pink wool—to be taken out in times of tranquil peace; in times of stress and turmoil shall we keep it—in swaddling bands? No, a thousand times, no! The common law is for times of unrest, war,—and the like. (*He turns direct to MARGARET.*)

I will to every magistrate in Boston. There shall be another trial, and at that trial I shall be beside you.

CRONE. She hath a devil, master; speak not for her.

GOODWIFE MARTIN. Speak not for her. She hath met wi' th' devil at even, back o' the graveyard, master.

ELIZBETH (*to CALEF*). Ay, you shall stand beside her—as you have stood. (*Goes close to MARGARET.*) Who was he with thee in the graveyard,

Margaret? Unless thou confess it, thou shalt surely hang.

CALEF (*astounded*). Was it for that——?

Ay, I *was* with her in the graveyard—the only place in this little canting town where lovers could meet—the shadow of the grave. (*Rounds on GRIGGS.*) As you well know, I was there to plight my troth——

GRIGGS. Ay, was it you?

ELIZABETH. Was it you who fled away when the people took her? Then you, too, have a devil.

MARY. }

ANNE. }

ABIGAIL. }

Avoid! Avoid! (*They edge away.*)

ELIZABETH. Hearken! I accuse him of the sin of witchcraft! He was there in the graveyard with her; I heard his voice a-teaching her black arts but I could not see him.

GRIGGS (*paternally to MARGARET*). Was it his voice they heard? Think well. Confess the truth and save thy soul alive and eke thy body. Was it Calef's voice?

MARGARET (*laughing feverishly, advances*). His voice? They heard the wind i' th' pines and shrieked, "A devil!" They'll see a devil i' th' pale o' th' moon, or th' bloom o' th' mayflower, i' th' old crone or th' young maid; but never, never do they see him i' th' whisperings o' their own hearts.

His voice? Why, I was a-mumbling charms to th' moon, and singing and crying down curses on your children.

O to think o't! It is not possible—you know it is not possible.



CRONE. She is possessed. }  
 PUTNAM. Bravo Mistress! } (*They speak together.*)

CALEF. Heed her not; it was I!

GOODWIFE MARTIN. Go to—he lies to save her.

PARRIS. She hath confessed. The witch hath confessed.

MARGARET (*turning on CHILDREN—ELIZABETH has joined others.*) And you, afflicted children— (*Laughs.*) AFFLICTED children! Liars! Hypocrites! Ye play a part. (*The CHILDREN cry out as though tormented.*) But if I could afflict you, ah—'twould be no play-acting ye show the people.

PARRIS (*advancing*). Peace, woman!

MARGARET (*turning fiercely on ELIZABETH*). For that thou hast sought to hang Robert Calef along with me, there shall be punishment, I know it well—and it doth glad me—glad me—glad me——.

GRIGGS. Peace, peace, I tell thee. (*He makes sign to MARSHAL to proceed.*)

MARGARET. There is no peace; there is only fear and hate.

O I believe in the powers of darkness, good uncle. I no longer deny the sight o' my eyes, the hearing o' my ears.

The devil hath conquered, good uncle, thou hast conquered.

*All present huddle to door, crying: Avoid! Avoid!  
 The MARSHAL drags her to door.*

CURTAIN.



## ACT V.

*The road leading to Gallows Hill. The place is rocky, uneven, leading abruptly up-hill at the back. A few scraggy pine trees at back. Desolation.*

*A number of the townspeople are waiting, at least ten. Among them are bold and timid, those beginning to see a glimmer of daylight and those in blackest superstition. The foremost group are those most eager to see the hanging, waiting with fearful joy. The others are to the right.*

PUTNAM. When do they bring them out?

FIRST CITIZEN. At noon.

SECOND CITIZEN. 'Tis past.

THIRD CITIZEN. Perchance the devil hath whisked 'em away on a broomstick.

FOURTH CITIZEN. I wonder that the devil canna save his own.

FIRST CITIZEN. I say he doth; I say they do not suffer at all in hanging. Satan beareth the soul away before the rope toucheth *body*.

SIXTH CITIZEN. There they come! There *they come!*

SEVENTH CITIZEN. Who's that wi' Margaret Scott?

EIGHTH CITIZEN. 'Tis Robert Calef; she is his light-o-love.

PUTNAM. No such thing, woman!

EIGHTH CITIZEN. I say she is, He was wi' her in the graveyard.

PUTNAM. Tut! 'Twas the devil in Robert Calef's shape.

NINTH CITIZEN. Men say he hath been to th' Governor in Boston.

FIRST CITIZEN. Look! Look yonder! What doth Cotton Mather here in Salem?

SECOND CITIZEN. See him eye Robert Calef.

THIRD CITIZEN. Mayhap he fears lest Calef snatch the witch out of his clutches.

*The MARSHAL enters with MARY EASTY, MARGARET SCOTT, the FIRST CONSTABLE, MATHER, PARRIS, CALEF and others. The nearest citizens, FIRST, SECOND and THIRD shrink back, giving place to bolder ones.*

FIRST	}	CITIZENS. 'Avoid! Avoid!
SECOND		
THIRD		

*As MARSHAL comes forward, the SIXTH, SEVENTH, EIGHTH, NINTH citizens are forced back to left front. TENTH citizen remains at back.*

FIFTH CITIZEN. Ha' done, Cotton Mather; enough have suffered.

SIXTH CITIZEN (*threateningly*). You are hanging God's elect.

CRONE (*hobbles forward from right hand group*). Nay, nay, let the witches hang!

SEVENTH CITIZEN. Ha' done! Ha' done! Ye have hanged enough; eleven are enough.

MATHER (*advancing*). People of Salem, ye who say enough are hanged, eleven are enough, I say eleven nor *eleven thousand* are not enough to purge Christ's kingdom.

Have ye not read in Holy Scripture how he that was possessed of the devil had the legion? Dreadful to be spoken! A legion! Know ye that a legion consisteth of twelve thousand, five hundred devils?

Will ye let one witch escape and thereby have twelve thousand, five hundred devils in your midst?

CRIES (*from right hand*). No! No!

CALEF. Cotton Mather, devils will flourish while you feed men with lies.

MATHER. Robert Calef, thou lost man——!

*Enter SECOND CONSTABLE from above, back.*

SECOND CONSTABLE. Mr. Mather, there is an uneasy movement in the people yonder—the sheriff fears delay—lest they plan rescue——

MATHER. I'll be with him straight.

*He goes out back; some of the people stream out after him. A bell begins to toll. MARGARET shrinks away. The people move toward back of place, looking eagerly upward.*

CALEF (*to MARGARET*). Courage!

MARGARET. I fear to die—feeling hate, this tide of hate which wells in me. (*Turns to him.*) Thou hast said how we who die suffer that light may come to others.

Idle words!

How may light come through me—who feel only darkness?

CALEF (*with his head sunk on his chest*). Light hath come to me through thee, Marg'ret.

MARGARET (*taking a step nearer to him*). Ah, no, no! From thee to me! Thou hast taught me—shown me—. Thou the master; I the scholar.

CALEF (*Loking off to crowd and clenching his fists*). Oh if they had only attacked me—the cowards! But that thou must suffer—through the teaching! (*He turns partly away.*)

MARGARET (*pressing closer*). No, no, Robert, I felt it all—ere I saw thee. Ah! (*She shrinks again as the bell tolls, then she stiffens with anger.*) Ah, they shall suffer who cause the death of us; they shall suffer, my uncle—Elizabeth—Mr. Mather. I do feel it and know it and it makes me *glad*.

MARY EASTY *slightly turns toward her, smiling a denial.*

CALEF. Margaret—no!

MARGARET. But I do! (*A trifle scornfully.*) Oh I know—I should make my peace with God. Peace with God—when *they* have forced me into league with the devil!!!—have made me to take of the wine of fear, of the bread of hatred—devil's sacrament!

I was kindly—loving—I knew not I had this passion in me. It is so strong I cannot rise above it—so I die. (*With a quick sob, as the MARSHAL enters.*) Oh Robert, Robert, must I die?

MARSHAL. Mary Easty, thou art summoned in the name of the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MARGARET (*taking a step toward MARY EASTY and holding out her arms*). Mary Easty, Mary Easty, God be with thee!



MARY EASTY *turns, gives the girl a loving look, and passes out with* MARSHAL.

OLD CRONE (*to* MARGARET). Pratest thou of God?

MARGARET. If I have sinned—God only is my judge.

*The other members of the crowd press forward again, turning on her.*

SIXTH CITIZEN. Margaret, Margaret, pray right now to God; he will pardon.

SEVENTH CITIZEN. Ay, if indeed thou be'st no witch—pray, pray!

CRONE. She canna pray; witches ha' lost the power.

SIXTH	}	CITIZENS. Pray! See if she can pray!
SEVENTH		
EIGHTH		

NINTH CITIZEN. Ay, say the Lord's prayer forward—if you can.

FIRST CITIZEN. She cannot get beyond the "Our Father."

SECOND CITIZEN. It will be proof enow thou art a witch when thou stumble and grow still.

ALL THE CITIZENS. Say the prayer! Say the prayer!

CALEF. Men, do ye mean it? Are ye in earnest?

MARGARET *motions to him; he bends toward her to listen.*



FIRST CONSTABLE (*to* SECOND CONSTABLE). Hie ye to Mr. Mather; bid him come quick or the fools will free her. Haste ye! (SECOND CONSTABLE *goes.*)

MARGARET (*to* CALEF). It may not aid me—but if I say the prayer, hereafter men may say, She was no witch; maybe we accuse others wrongly. It may turn the tide.

CALEF. The tide *is* turning. (*He addresses people.*) O let the Lord's prayer be the sign! If she repeat it—without stumbling—she is proved—not a witch. Ye say so?

SIXTH CITIZEN. Ay, she canna say the prayer and be devil's child.

ALL CITIZENS. Let her pray! Let her pray!

MATHER *enters from back with* SECOND CONSTABLE.

MATHER. Who spoke? Would ye deny your Lord who cast out devils?

CALEF. Men, men, it is *so* he would cramp your souls. Hear ye *his* word: Those who deny the devil, deny God!

Well, *I* deny the devil and all his works, and I say those deny God who *believe* in the devil.

Look on this woman in the image of God and see the devil in her if you dare.

MATHER. Blasphemer!

CALEF. Who dares stand with me?

MATHER (*quietly*). Ay, who *dares*?

*There is a pause, then a few uneasy cries from the people, quickly gaining boldness.*

CITIZENS: The prayer! The prayer! Let her say the prayer!

See if she say it straight wi'out a break!

Forward—not backward!

The prayer! The prayer!

CALEF. If she repeat it so—who stands for her?

ALL THE CITIZENS (*clearly*). I! I!

PUTNAM. Against the devil himself!

CALEF. Speak, Margaret, there is a chance.

MARGARET (*slowly amid hush*). Our father which art in heaven——

*The men slowly remove their hats.*

FIRST CITIZEN. Stand from her, Robert Calef! Not too near! (CALEF *moves from her.*)

MARGARET. Hallowed be Thy name! Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we—as—we—forgive—as we forgive—Oh no, no! Grant me more mercy, Lord, than I possess! Do Thou but grant me power to forgive! I ask no more—nor life nor nothing else—but only to forgive—*dear God*——

MARSHAL *enters during prayer.*

MARSHAL. Margaret Scott, thou art summoned in the name of the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

*Cries of relief from the crowd which surges forward, pushing against CONSTABLES who force them back.*

CRIES OF CITIZENS. Witch.  
Proven!

Hang her!  
Aloft wi' the devil's child!  
Foul witch, aroint thee!  
(*They cry together and separately.*)

MARGARET (*to CALEF*). O tell them—tell them  
—I forgive!  
Finish thou the prayer, beloved.

*The people shrink away from her, as she passes out back with the MARSHAL and CONSTABLES.*

CALEF *stretches out his arms after her, then suddenly turns, lifting his arms to God. He sinks slowly on his knees. He repeats the Lord's prayer.*

CALEF. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we—*forgive*—those that trespass against us. . . . And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom—and the power—and the glory *forever*.

CITIZENS (*with unction*). Amen!

THE END.









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